

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE.

No. 1165. Fourth Series, No. 26. 29 September, 1866.

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OUR SILENT CITY

[A poem written for the Hingham Cemetery Fair of August, 1866, by one "who has some there."]

All that tread the globe are but a handful to the tribes that slumber in its bosom. — W. C. BRYANT.

Have we not all one there?

An aged sire — circling his ripened brow

The blended hues of time's toil, joy and care,
A nimbus of white light radiant as snow;

When by our fireside beamed that light no more
We said the blessing, thence, had passed away;

When all the daily, dutious care was o'er
Which called to lip and eye that kindly ray,
When feeble step and failing speech were still,

With slow pace sought we then that Holy Hill
And in our Silent City's peaceful breast

Gave the spent mortal its last home of rest;

Henceforth that sacred place demands our
Have we not all one there? [care —

Have we not all one there?

Material arms folded above a heart

In every pulse of which our pulse had share,
Of whose life-spring our life-spring was a part;

Those arms like the embracing love of God,
Shielded and shut us in from every ill,

Straightened and smoothed the path our first
steps trod,

Composed the aching head or wayward will;

In their cold stillness shall they be forgot —

Say, has the earth a holier, dearer spot?

O, with what eager footsteps should we come
To beautify that Silent City Home!

Untiring as was hers should be our care —

Have we not all one there?

So many have one there

Who had just braced the manly armor on,

Just thrown life's banner to the buoyant air

Or the first well-fought battle bravely won;

And some of these fell in our country's cause,

And where they fell or rest is hallowed ground;

But one — above the mystery we pause —

Our Father still a Father we have found,

And when His hand snatched that loved life
away

He saw a purpose they shall see one day

Who mourn their *last*. — She, too, the daughter,
wife,

Who nobly lost and nobly found her life!

Maidens and youths, O, for our brave and fair
Keep, keep all lovely there.

So many have one there —

Sweet buds, sprinkled all over terrace, square
and mound;

How blooms the earthly in those blossoms
rare!

How speaks the heavenly through each summer
Tuning the silence into melody [sound,
Of choral, childish voices, free from pain!

Ah, blessed thought — upon the great Life-tree
Those buds, unfolded, shall be found again,
And yearning mother-hearts shall own that
death

Was of true life the first enraptured breath;
And in that meeting-morning's radiant glow

They shall taste joy the untried cannot know.

Strew thick your flowers, with fragrance fill
So many have one there! [the air,

Yes, we have all some there —

Our Silent City streets are peopled well;

They could not stay our time — fruits here to
share,

These cannot reach them where in light they
But the dear casket left for memory [dwell;

We will enwreath with Nature's fairest forms,

Art, too, affection's promptings shall obey
Till cold, damp Fear into Faith's likeness warms,

Till aching hearts liked hushed ones there
find peace [increase;

As through earth's beauty heavenly hopes
And lingering footsteps like the lingering day

Shall o'er our Holy Hill-top love to stray.

All hearts, all hands, in the blest toil may
For we have all some there. [share,

HUMAN BROTHERHOOD.

The monarch, glittering with the pomp of state,
Wears the same flesh as those that die of hun-
ger;

Like them the worm shall be his loathsome mate,
When he resigns his glory to a younger.

The beauty, worshipped by the limner's eye,

On whom a hundred suitors gaze admiring,

Is sister to the hag, deformed, awry,

Who gathers in the road her scanty firing,

The scholar, glorying in the stamp of mind,

Master of all the wisdom time hath hoarded

Is brother to the lumpish, untaught hind,

Whose vulgar name shall perish unrecorded.

Therefore, let human sympathies be strong,

Let each man share his welfare with his
neighbours;

To the whole race heaven's bounteous gifts be-
long;

None may live idly while his fellow labours.

— All the Year Round.

From the Examiner.

Charles Lamb: A Memoir. By Barry Cornwall. Moxon.

STRENGTH of simplicity, with fine perception of the truths of life and delicate skill in expression, give a rare charm to this Memoir of Charles Lamb by one of the most unaffected of our living poets, who was also one of the most familiar of Charles Lamb's friends during the last seventeen or eighteen years of his lifetime. The writing of this memoir, at the age of seventy-seven, as its author reminds us in the preface, was a labour of love. Here and there in the book, for want of the keen eye of younger days over the proof-sheets, some petty flaw of a clerical or printer's error has passed uncorrected, and once or twice something is said that was not worth saying. It was not worth while, since there the parallel stopped, to suggest that Cromwell and Lamb both died at the age of fifty-nine. But a simple dip of ink will suffice to remove from the second edition of this book every little flaw, and place above the reach of petty criticism one of the most genuine and touching memoirs that personal friendship has given to the literature of our language. More comment would be superfluous. The book is one not to be criticized, but enjoyed; and there is no better way of giving to all readers a right appreciation of its contents, with a sharp appetite for reading them from the first to the last page, than by letting it speak for itself through a few examples of its way of dealing with its subject. First, we may note that the great central idea, which is the point of unity in every good work of art, was not wanting to Charles Lamb's life. Mr. Procter apprehends this so distinctly as to give to the true and simple memoir, also in that most essential respect, the charm of a finished work of art:

The fact that distinguished Charles Lamb from other men was his entire devotion to one grand and tender purpose. There is, probably, a romance involved in every life. In his life it exceeded that of others. In gravity, in acuteness, in his noble battle with a great calamity, it was beyond the rest. Neither pleasure, nor toil ever distracted him from his holy purpose. Everything was made subservient to it. He had an insane sister, who, in a moment of uncontrollable madness, had unconsciously destroyed her own mother; and to protect and save this sister—a gentle woman, who had watched like a mother over his own infancy—the whole length of his life was devoted. What he endured, through the space of nearly forty

years, from the incessant fear and frequent recurrence of his sister's insanity, can now only be conjectured. In this constant and uncomplaining endurance, and in his steady adherence to a great principle of conduct, his life was heroic.

We read of men giving up all their days to a single object: to religion, to vengeance, to some overpowering selfish wish; of daring acts done to avert death or disgrace, or some oppressing misfortune. We read mythical tales of friendship; but we do not recollect any instance in which a great object has been so unremittingly carried out throughout a whole life, in defiance of a thousand difficulties, and of numberless temptations, straining the good resolution to its utmost, except in the case of our poor clerk of the India House.

Of the character in which this grand and tender purpose took its root, here is, in a few words, much told:

Lamb's earliest friends and confidants (with one exception) were singularly void of wit and the love of jesting. His sister was grave; his father gradually sinking into dotage; Coleridge was immersed in religious subtleties and poetic dreams; and Charles Lloyd, sad and logical and analytical, was the antithesis of all that is lively and humorous. But thoughts and images stole in from other quarters; and Lamb's mind was essentially quick and productive. Nothing lay barren in it; and much of what was planted there grew and spread and became beautiful. He himself has sown the seeds of humour in many English hearts. His own humour is essentially English. It is addressed to his own countrymen; to the men "whose limbs were made in England;" not to foreign intellects, nor perhaps to the universal mind. Humour, which is the humour of a man, (of the writer himself or of his creations) must frequently remain, in its fragrant blossoming state, in the land of its birth. Like some of the most delicate wines and flowers, it will not bear travel.

Apart from his humour and other excellences, Charles Lamb combined qualities such as are seldom united in one person; which indeed seem not easily reconcilable with each other: namely much prudence, with much generosity; great tenderness of heart, with a firm will. To these was superadded that racy humour which has served to distinguish him from other men. There is no other writer that I know of, in whom tenderness and good sense and humour are so intimately and happily blended; no one whose view of men and things is so invariably generous and true, and independent. These qualities made their way slowly and fairly. They were not taken up as a matter of favour or fancy, and then abandoned. They struggled through many years of neglect, and some of contumely, before they took their stand triumphantly, and as things not to be ignored by any one.

The tragedy of Lamb's life sprang from a terrible incident which Mr. Procter tells. Lamb's father had been, till he became almost imbecile of mind, clerk to Mr. Samuel Salt, a barrister of the Inner Temple, who was independent of his practice, if he had any; and the Lamb family had been quartered in the good-natured barrister's chambers in Crown-office row.

It was at a very tender age that Charles Lamb entered the "work-a-day" world. His elder brother, John, had at that time a clerkship in the South Sea House, and Charles passed a short time there under his brother's care or control, and must thus have gained some knowledge of figures. The precise nature of his occupation in this deserted place, however (where some forms of business were kept up, "though the soul be long since fled," and where the directors met mainly "to declare a dead dividend") is not stated in the charming paper of "The South Sea House." Charles remained in this office only until the 5th April, 1792, when he obtained an appointment (through the influence, I believe, of Mr. Salt) as clerk in the Accountant's office of the East India Company. He was then seventeen years of age.

About three years after Charles became a clerk in the India House, his family appear to have moved from Crown-office row, into poor lodgings at No. 7 Little Queen street, Holborn. His father at that time had a small pension from Mr. Salt, whose service he had left, being almost fatuous; his mother was ill and bedridden; and his sister Mary was tired out, by needle-work all day, and by taking care of her mother throughout the night. "Of all the people in the world" (Charles says) "she was most thoroughly devoid of all selfishness." There was also, as a member of the family, an old aunt, who had a trifling annuity for her life, which she poured into the common fund. John Lamb (Charles's elder brother) lived elsewhere; having occasional intercourse only with his kindred. He continued, however, to visit them, whilst he preserved his "comfortable" clerkship in the South Sea House.

It was under this state of things that they all drifted down to the terrible year, 1796. It was a year dark with horror. There was an hereditary taint of insanity in the family, which caused even Charles himself to be placed, for a short time, in Hoxton Lunatic Asylum. "The six weeks that finished last year and began this (1796), your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a madhouse, at Hoxton." These are his words when writing to Coleridge. Mary Lamb had previously been repeatedly attacked by the same dreadful disorder; and this now broke out afresh in a sudden burst of acute madness. She had been moody and ill, for some little time previously, and the illness came to a crisis on the 23rd of September, 1796. On that day, just before dinner, Mary seized a

"case knife" which was lying on the table; pursued a little girl (her apprentice) round the room; hurled about the dinner forks; and, finally, in a fit of uncontrollable frenzy, stabbed her mother to the heart. Charles was at hand, only in time to snatch the knife out of her grasp, before further hurt could be done. He found his father wounded in the forehead by one of the forks, and his aunt lying insensible and apparently dying, on the floor of the room.

This happened on a Thursday; and on the following day an inquest was held on the mother's body, and a verdict of Mary's lunacy was immediately found by the jury. The Lambs had a few friends. Mr. Norris—the friend of Charles's father and of his own childhood—"was very kind to us;" and Sam. Le Grice "then in town" (Charles writes) "was as a brother to me, and gave up every hour of his time in constant attendance on my father."

After the fatal deed, Mary Lamb was deeply afflicted. Her act was in the first instance totally unknown to her. Afterwards, when her consciousness returned and she was informed of it, she suffered great grief. And subsequently, when she became "calm and serene," and saw the misfortune in a clearer light, this was "far, very far from an indecent or forgetful serenity," as her brother says. She had no defiant air; no affectation, nor too extravagant a display of sorrow. She saw her act, as she saw all other things, by the light of her own clear and gentle good sense. She was sad; but the deed was past 'recall, and at the time of its commission had been utterly beyond either her control or knowledge.

After the inquest, Mary Lamb was placed in a lunatic asylum; where, after a short time, she recovered her serenity. A rapid recovery after violent madness is not an unusual mark of the disease; it being in cases of quiet, inveterate insanity, that the return to sound mind (if it ever recur) is more gradual and slow. The recovery, however, was only temporary in her case. She was throughout her life subject to frequent recurrences of the same disease. At one time her brother Charles writes, "Poor Mary's disorder so frequently recurring has made us a sort of marked people." At another time he says, "I consider her as perpetually on the brink of madness." And so, indeed, she continued during the remainder of her life; and she lived to the age of eighty-two years.

Charles was now left alone in the world. His father was imbecile; his sister insane; and his brother afforded no substantial assistance or comfort. He was scarcely out of boyhood when he learned that the world has its dangerous places and barren deserts; and that he had to struggle for his living, without help. He found that he had to take upon himself all the cares of a parent or protector (to his sister) even before he had studied the duties of a man.

In another part of the memoir the delicate analysis of Charles Lamb's intellectual

life which pervades Mr. Procter's volume takes this form:

It would be very interesting, were it practicable, to trace with certainty the sources that supplied Charles Lamb's inspiration. But this must always be impossible. For inspiration, in all cases, proceeds from many sources, although there may be one influence predominating. It is clear that a great Tragedy mainly determined his conduct through life, and operated therefore materially on his thoughts as well as actions. The terrible death of his mother concentrated and strengthened his mind, and prevented its dissipation into trifling and ignoble thoughts. The regularity of the India House labour upheld him. The extent and character of his acquaintance also helped to determine the quality of the things which he produced. Had he seen less, his mind might have become warped and rigid, as from want of space. Had he seen too much, his thoughts might have been split and exhausted upon too many points, — and would thus have been so perplexed and harassed, that the value of his productions now known and current through all classes might scarcely have exceeded a negative quantity. Then, in his companions he must be accounted fortunate. Coleridge helped to unloose his mind from too precise notions: Southey gave it consistency and correctness: Manning expanded his vision: Hazlitt gave him daring: perhaps even poor George Dyer, like some unrecognized virtue, may have kept alive and nourished the pity and tenderness which were originally sown within him. We must leave the difficulty as we must leave the great problems of Nature, unexplained; and be content with what is self-evident before us. We know, at all events, that he had an open heart, and that the heart is a fountain which never fails.

Here is a picture of the outward aspect of the man:

Persons who had been in the habit of traversing Covent Garden at that time (seven-and-forty years ago), might by extending their walk a few yards into Russell street, have noted a small spare man, clothed in black, who went out every morning and returned every afternoon, as regularly as the hands of the clock moved towards certain hours. You could not mistake him. He was somewhat stiff in his manner, and almost clerical in dress; which indicated much wear. He had a long, melancholy face, with keen penetrating eyes; and he walked with a short, resolute step, City-wards. He looked no one in the face for more than a moment, yet contrived to see everything as he went on. No one who ever studied the human features could pass him, by without recollecting his countenance; it was full of sensibility, and it came upon you like a new thought, which you could not help dwelling upon afterwards; it gave rise to meditation and did you good. This small, half-clerical man, was — Charles Lamb.

I had known him for a short time previously to 1818; having been introduced to him at Mr. Leigh Hunt's house, where I enjoyed his company once or twice over agreeable suppers; but I knew him slightly only, and did not see much of him until he and his sister went to occupy the lodgings in Russell street, where he invited me to come and see him. They lived in the corner house adjoining Bow street. This house belonged, at that time, to an ironmonger (or brazier), and was comfortable and clean, — and a little noisy. Charles Lamb was about forty years of age when I first saw him; and I knew him intimately for the greater part of twenty years. Small and spare in person, and with small legs ("immaterial legs," Hood called them), he had a dark complexion, dark, curling hair, almost black, and a grave look, lightening up occasionally, and capable of sudden merriment. His laugh was seldom excited by jokes merely ludicrous; it was never spiteful; and his quiet smile was sometimes inexpressibly sweet: perhaps it had a touch of sadness in it. His mouth was well-shaped; his lip tremulous with expression; his brown eyes were quick, restless, and glittering; and he had a grand head, full of thought. Leigh Hunt said that "he had a head worthy of Aristotle." Hazlitt calls it "a fine Titian head, full of dumb eloquence."

And here, with more suggestion of his personal aspect and manner, are Mr. Procter's loving recollections of the simple-hearted humourist, who was a truer hero than either Hector or Achilles, as he was known to his friends in his home:

When my thoughts turn backward, as they sometimes do, to these past days, I see my dear old friend again, — "in my mind's eye, Horatio," with his outstretched hand, and his grave sweet smile of welcome. It was always in a room of moderate size, comfortably, but plainly furnished, that he lived. An old mahogany table was opened out in the middle of the room, round which, and near the walls, were old high backed chairs (such as our grandfathers used), and a long plain bookcase completely filled with old books. These were his "ragged veterans." In one of his letters he says, "My rooms are luxurious, one for prints and one for books; a summer and winter parlour." They, however, were not otherwise decorated. I do not remember ever to have seen a flower or an image in them. He had not been educated into expensive tastes. His extravagances were confined to books. These were all chosen by himself, all old, and all in "admirable disorder;" yet he could lay his hand on any volume in a moment. "You never saw," he writes, "a bookcase in more true harmony with the contents than what I have nailed up in my room. Though new it has more aptitude for growing old than you shall often see; as one sometimes gets a friend in the middle of life who becomes an old friend in a short time."

Here Charles Lamb sat, when at home, always near the table. At the opposite side was his sister, engaged in some domestic work, knitting or sewing, or poring over a modern novel. "Bridget in some things is behind her years." In fact, although she was ten years older than her brother, she had more sympathy with modern books and with youthful fancies than he had. She wore a neat cap, of the fashion of her youth; an old-fashioned dress. Her face was pale and somewhat square; but very placid; with gray intelligent eyes. She was very mild in her manners to strangers; and to her brother gentle and tender, always. She had often an upward look of peculiar meaning, when directed towards him; as though to give him assurance that all was then well with her. His affection for her was somewhat less on the surface; but always present. There was great gratitude intermingled with it. "In the days of weakling infancy," he writes, "I was her tender charge, as I have been her care in foolish manhood since." Then he adds, pathetically, "I wish I could throw into a heap the remainder of our joint existences, that we might share them in equal division."

Lamb himself was always dressed in black. "I take it," he says, "to be the proper costume of an author." When this was once objected to, at a wedding, he pleaded the raven's apology in the fable, that "he had no other." His clothes were entirely black; and he wore long black gaiters, up to the knees. His head was bent a little forward, like one who had been reading; and, if not standing or waking, he generally had in his hand an old book, a pinch of snuff, or, later in the evening, a pipe. He stammered a little, pleasantly, just enough to prevent his making speeches; just enough to make you listen eagerly for his words, always full of meaning, or charged with a jest; or referring (but this was rare) to some line or passage from one of the old Elizabethan writers, which was always ushered in with a smile of tender reverence. When he read aloud it was with a slight tone, which I used to think he had caught from Coleridge; Coleridge's recitation, however, rising to a chant. Lamb's reading was not generally in books of verse, but in the old lay writers, whose tendency was towards religious thoughts. He liked however religious verse: "I can read," he writes to Bernard Barton, "the homely old version of the Psalms in our prayer-books, for an hour or two, without sense of weariness." He avoided manuscripts as much as practicable: "all things read *raw* to me in manuscript." Lamb wrote much, including many letters; but his hands were wanting in pliancy ("inveterate clumsiness" are his words), and his handwriting was therefore never good. It was neither text nor running hand, and the letters did not indicate any fluency; it was not the handwriting of an old man nor of a young man; yet it had a very peculiar character; stiff, resolute, distinct; quite unlike all others that I have seen, and easily distinguishable amongst a thousand.

No one has described Lamb's manner or merits so well as Hazlitt: "He always made the best pun and the best remark in the course of the evening. His serious conversation, like his serious writing, is his best. No one ever stammered out such fine piquant, deep, eloquent things, in half a dozen sentences, as he does. His jests scald like tears; and he probes a question with a play upon words. There was no fuss or cant about him. He has furnished many a text for Coleridge to preach upon."

Through Mr. Procter's eyes let us next see Charles Lamb in that one of his books which is the truest reflex of his life and character. Mr. Elia was a senior clerk in the India house, who was dead before the appearance of the *Essays* written in his name.

Of the *Essays* of "Elia," written originally for the *London Magazine*, I feel it difficult to speak. They are the best amongst the good: his best. I see that they are genial, delicate, terse, full of thought, and full of humour; that they are delightfully personal; and when he speaks of himself you cannot hear too much: that they are not imitations, but adoptions. We encounter his likings and fears, his fancies (his nature) in all. The words have an import never known before: the syllables have expanded their meaning, like opened flowers; the goodness of others is heightened by his own tenderness; and what is in nature hard and bad is qualified (qualified, not concealed) by the tender light of pity, which always intermingles with his own vision. Gravity and laughter, fact and fiction are heaped together, leavened in each case by charity and toleration; and all are marked by a wise humanity. Lamb's humour, I imagine, often reflected (sometimes, I hope, relieved) the load of pain that always weighed on his own heart.

And now let us pass, with Mr. Procter for our guide, among the friends of the man who was in all things most worthy of friendship:

He was ready to defend man or beast, whenever unjustly attacked. I remember that, at one of the monthly magazine dinners, when John Wilkes was too roughly handled, Lamb quoted the story (not generally known) of his replying, when the blackbirds were reported to have stolen all his cherries, "Poor birds, they are welcome." He said that those impulsive words showed the inner nature of the man more truly than all his political speeches. Lamb's charity extended to all things. I never heard him speak spitefully of any author. He thought that every one should have a clear stage, unobstructed. His heart, young at all times, never grew hard or callous during life. There was always in it a tender spot; which Time was unable to touch. He gave away *greatly*, when

the amount of his means are taken into consideration; he gave away money, — even annuities, I believe, to old impoverished friends whose wants were known to him. I remember that once, when we were sauntering together on Pentonville Hill, and he noticed great depression in me, which he attributed to want of money, he said, suddenly, in his stammering way, "My dear boy, I — I have a quantity of useless things. I have now — in my desk, a — a hundred pounds — that I don't — don't *know* what to do with. Take it." I was much touched: but I assured him that my depression did not arise from want of money. He was very home-loving; he loved London as the best of places; he loved his home as the dearest spot in London: it was the inmost heart of the sanctuary. Whilst at home he had no curiosity for what passed beyond his own territory. His eyes were never truant; no one ever saw him peering out of window, examining the crowds flowing by; no one ever surprised him gazing on vacancy. "I lose myself," he says, "in other men's minds. When I am not walking I am reading; I cannot sit and think; books think for me." If it was not the time for his pipe, it was always the time for an old play, or for a talk with friends. In the midst of this society his own mind grew green again and blossomed; or, as he would have said, "burgeoned."

From the old Christ's Hospital days Coleridge had been closer than almost any man to Charles Lamb's heart. 'Coleridge is dead. — Coleridge is dead,' he used to say to himself aloud after the grave had parted them. Mr. Procter believes Coleridge's present fame to be beyond his merit, and whether right or wrong here in his estimate he is undoubtedly both right and just, and will not want success in his endeavours to recall attention to the fine qualities of William Hazlitt, and wipe from his memory the petty slanders of political opponents.

If Lamb's youngest and tenderest reverence was given to Coleridge, Hazlitt's intellect must also have commanded his later permanent respect. Without the imagination and extreme facility of Coleridge, he had almost as much subtlety and far more steadfastness of mind. Perhaps this steadfastness remained sometimes until it took the colour of obstinacy; but as in the case of his constancy to the first Napoleon, it was obstinacy riveted and made firm by some concurring respect. I do not know that Hazlitt had the more affectionate nature of the two; but assuredly he was tossed less about and his sight less obscured by floating fancies and fast changing projects (*musce volantes*) than the other. To the one is ascribed fierce and envious passions; coarse thoughts and habits — (he has indeed been crowned by defamation); whilst to Coleridge has been awarded reputation and glory, and praise from a thousand tongues. To secure justice we must wait for unbiased posterity.

I meet at present with few persons who recollect much of Hazlitt. Some profess to have heard nothing of him except his prejudices and violence; but his prejudices were few, and his violence (if violence he had), was of very rare occurrence. He was extremely patient, indeed, although earnest when discussing points in politics, respecting which he held very strong and decided opinions. But he circulated his thoughts on many other subjects, whereon he ought not to have excited offence or opposition. He wrote (and he wrote well), upon many things lying far beyond the limits of politics. To use his own words, "I have at least glanced over a number of subjects; painting, poetry, prose, plays, politics, parliamentary speakers, metaphysical lore, books, men, and things." This list, extensive as it is, does not specify very precisely all the subjects on which he wrote. His thoughts range over the literature of Elizabeth and James's times, and of the time of Charles II.; over a large portion of modern literature; over the distinguishing character of men, their peculiarities of mind and manners; over the wonders of poetry, the subtleties of metaphysics, and the luminous regions of art. In painting, his criticisms (it is prettily said, by Leigh Hunt) cast a light upon the subject, like the glory reflected "from a painted window." I myself have, in my library, eighteen volumes of Hazlitt's works, and I do not possess all that he published. Besides being an original thinker, Hazlitt excelled in conversation. He was, moreover, a very temperate liver; yet his enemies proclaimed to the world that he was wanting even in sobriety. During the thirteen years that I knew him intimately, and (at certain seasons) saw him almost every day, I knew that he drank nothing stronger than water; except tea, indeed, in which he indulged in the morning. Had he been as temperate in his political views as in his cups, he would have escaped the slander that pursued him through life.

There was Leigh Hunt also:

All the three men, Lamb, Hazlitt, and Hunt, were throughout their lives Unitarians, as was also George Dyer; Coleridge was an Unitarian preacher in his youth, having seceded from the Church of England: to which, however, he returned, and was in his later years a strenuous supporter of the National faith. George Dyer once sent a pamphlet to convert Charles to Unitarianism. "Dear blundering soul" (Lamb said), "why I am as old a One Goddite as himself." To Southey Lamb writes, "Being, as you know, not quite a churchman, I felt a jealousy at the Church taking to herself the whole deserts of Christianity." His great, and indeed infinite reverence, nevertheless, for Christ is shown in his own Christian virtues and in constant expressions of reverence. In Hazlitt's Paper of "Persons one would wish to have seen," Lamb is made to refer to Jesus Christ at he "who once put on a semblance of mortali-

ty," and to say, "If he were to come into the room, we should all fall down and kiss the hem of his garment."

Mr. Procter's sketch of Charles Lamb's friend Dyer, who is named in the preceding extract, may be taken as a pleasant specimen of the delicate skill with which he draws the characters of men who made the little world that cheered this gentle life of a man stricken heavily yet not cast down :

George Dyer, once a pupil in Christ's Hospital, possessing a good reputation as a classical scholar, and who had preceded Lamb in the school, about this time came into the circle of his familiars. Dyer was one of the simplest and most inoffensive men in the world; in his heart there existed nothing but what was altogether pure and unsophisticated. He seemed never to have outgrown the innocence of childhood; or rather he appeared to be without those germs or first principles of evil which sometimes begin to show themselves even in childhood itself. He was not only without any of the dark passions himself, but he would not perceive them in others. He looked only on the sunshine. Hazlitt, speaking of him in his "Conversation of Authors," says, "He lives amongst the old authors, if he does not enter much into their spirit. He handles the covers, and turns over the pages, and is familiar with the names and dates. He is busy and self-involved. He hangs like a film and cobweb upon letters, or is like the dust upon the outside of knowledge, which should not too rudely be brushed aside. He follows learning as its shadow, but as such he is respectable. He browses on the husks and leaves of books." And Lamb says, "The Gods, by denying him the very faculty of discrimination, have effectually cut off every seed of envy in his bosom."

Dyer was very thin and short in person, and was extremely near-sighted; and his motions were often (apparently) spasmodic. His means of living were very scanty; he subsisted mainly by supervising the press, being employed for that purpose by booksellers when they were printing Greek or Latin books. He dwelt in Clifford's Inn "like a dove in an asp's nest," as Charles Lamb wittily says; and he might often have been seen with a classical volume in his hand, and another in his pocket, walking slowly along Fleet street or its neighbourhood, unconscious of gazers; cogitating over some sentence, the correctness of which it was his duty to determine. You might meet him murmuring to himself in a low voice, and apparently tasting the flavour of the words. Dyer's knowledge of the drama (which formed part of the subject of his first publication), may be guessed, by his having read Shakespeare, "an irregular genius," and having dipped into Rowe and Otway; but never having heard of any other writers in that class. In absence of mind, he probably exceeded every other living man. Lamb has set

forth one instance (which I know to be a fact) of Dyer's forgetfulness, in his "Oxford in the Vacation;" and to this various others might be added, such as his emptying his snuff-box into the teapot when he was preparing breakfast for a hungry friend, &c. But it is scarcely worth while to chronicle minutely the harmless foibles of this inoffensive old man. If I had to write his epitaph I should say that he was neither much respected nor at all hated; too good to dislike, too inactive to excite great affection; and that he was as simple as the daisy, which we think we admire, and daily tread under foot.

A personal recollection of Wordsworth is the last sketch we may allow ourselves to quote :

If Keats was by nature the most essentially a poet in the present century, there is little doubt that Wordsworth has left his impress more broadly and more permanently than any other of our later writers upon the literature of England. There are barren, unpeopled wastes in the "Excursion," and in some of the longer poems; but when his Genius stirs, we find ourselves in rich places which have no parallel in any book since the death of Milton. When his lyrical ballads first appeared, they encountered much opposition and some contempt. Readers had not for many years been accustomed to drink the waters of Helicon pure and undefiled; and Wordsworth (a prophet of the true faith) had to gird up his loins, march into the desert, and prepare for battle. He has, indeed, at last achieved a conquest; but a long course of time, although sure of eventual success, elapsed before he could boast of victory. The battle has been perilous. When the "Excursion" was published (in 1814) Lamb wrote a review of it for "The Quarterly Review." Whatever might have been the actual fitness of this performance, it seems to have been hacked to pieces; more than a third of the substance cut away; the warm expressions converted into cold ones; and (in Lamb's phrase) "the eyes pulled out and the bleeding sockets left." This mangling (or amendment, as I suppose it was considered) was the work of the late Mr. Gifford. Charles had a great admiration for Wordsworth. It was short of prostration, however. He states that the style of "Peter Bell" does not satisfy him: but "'Hartleap Well' is the tale for me," are his words in 1819.

I have a vivid recollection of Wordsworth, who was a very grave man, with strong features and a deep voice. I met him first at the chambers (they were in the Temple) of Mr. Henry Crabb Robinson, one of the most amiable of men. I was a young versifier, and Wordsworth was just emerging out of a cloud of ignorant contumely into the sunrise of his fame. He was fond (perhaps too fond) of reciting his own poetry, before friends and strangers. I was not attracted by his manner, which was almost too solemn, but I was deeply impressed by some of the weighty notes in his voice, when he was

delivering out his oracles. I forget whether it was "Dion" or the beautiful poem of "Laodamia" that he read; but I remembered the reading long afterwards, as one recollects the roll of the spent thunder.

I met Wordsworth occasionally afterwards, at Charles Lamb's, at Mr. Rogers's, and elsewhere, and once he did me the honour to call upon me. I remember that he had a very gentle aspect when he looked at my children. He took the hand of my dear daughter (who died lately) in his hand, and spoke some words to her, the recollection of which, perhaps, helped, with other things, to incline her to poetry. Hazlitt says that Wordsworth's face, notwithstanding his constitutional gravity, sometimes revealed indications of dry humour. And once, at a morning visit, I heard him give an account of his having breakfasted in company with Coleridge, and allowed him to expatiate to the extent of his lungs. "How could you permit him to go on and weary himself?" said Rogers; "why, you are to meet him at dinner this evening." "Yes," replied Wordsworth; "I know that very well; but we like to take the sting out of him beforehand."

And, coming back to Lamb again, here is the sum of all:

Charles Lamb was born almost in penury, and he was taught by charity. Even when a boy he was forced to labour for his bread. In the first opening of manhood a terrible calamity fell upon him; in magnitude fit to form the mystery or centre of an antique drama. He had to dwell, all his days, with a person incurably mad. From poverty he passed at once to unpleasant toil and perpetual fear. These were the sole changes in his fortune. Yet he gained friends, respect, a position; and great sympathy from all; showing what one poor man of genius under grievous misfortune, may do, if he be courageous and faithful to the end.

Charles Lamb never preached nor prescribed; but let his own actions tell their tale and produce their natural effects; neither did he deal out little apophthegms or scraps of wisdom, derived from other minds. But he succeeded; and in every success there must be a mainstay of right or truth to support it; otherwise it will eventually fail.

It is true that in his essays and numerous letters many of his sincere thoughts and opinions are written down. These, however, are written

down simply and just as they occur, without any special design. Some persons exhibit only their ingenuity, or learning. It is not every one who is able, like the licentiate Pedro Garcias, to deposit his wealth of soul by the roadside.

Like all persons of great intellectual sensibility, Lamb responded to all impressions. To sympathize with Tragedy or Comedy only, argues a limited capacity. The mind thus constructed is partially lame or torpid. One hemisphere has never been reached.

It should not be forgotten that Lamb possessed one great advantage. He lived and died amongst his equals. This was what enabled him to exercise his natural strength; as neither a parasite nor a patron can. It is marvellous how freedom of thought operates; what strength it gives to the system; with what lightness and freshness it endures the spirit. — Then, he was made stronger by trouble; made wiser by grief.

I have not attempted to fix the precise spot in which Charles Lamb is to shine hereafter in the firmament of letters. I am not of sufficient magnitude to determine his astral elevation — where he is to dwell — between the sun Shakespeare, and the twinkling Zoilus. That must be left to time. Even the fixed stars at first waver and coruscate, and require long seasons for their consummation and final settlement.

Whenever he differs with us in opinion, (as he does occasionally,) let us not hastily pronounce him to be wrong. It is wise, as well as modest, not to show too much eagerness to adjust the ideas of all other thinkers to the (sometimes low) level of our own.

Here, then, we close the book, not seldom to reopen it for authentic recollections of facts interesting to all lovers of letters, for criticism that may temper and amend opinions formed upon less knowledge, for refreshment in the fellowship of a book that is no product of the chemistry of the book trade, in combination of dry facts or strained fancies with demi paper and printer's ink, but tender, living thought.

Three different portraits of Charles Lamb and a portrait of his sister illustrate the volume. The next thing wanted is an accurate edition of his letters. Sir Thomas Talfourd sometimes made the mistake of abridging and modifying those he gave.

CHAPTER V.

GETTING AT THE TRUTH.

OUR friend Mrs. Ferrier, as the train bore her back from grim Birmingham, and home to gay Leamington, felt by no means gratified with the results of the day. If she had not been the dupe of another's cunning, she had been tricked by her own expectations; and that is usually the more galling humiliation of the two. She got a momentary glimpse of a letter in her son's hands, and the sight of it fanned her failing energies into a flame again.

The writer of the cherished letter was surely the detested Miss March. That young lady might be exulting in the thought that Richard would soon be irrevocably hers. "But no!" Mrs. Ferrier said to herself, — "no! until I actually know that the thing is beyond all cure, not one thing will I leave undone that can prevent it. I'll have this disgusting mystery probed, and sifted, and turned inside out, and, in short, made as clear and certain as though it had been performed in the middle of the day, and in the most public part of London. To-morrow morning I'll think of some means of getting at those doctors who used to frequent Scarlington House. I'll bring them — or one of them — to book. I'll get at the truth, if, in doing so, I make an enemy of the whole world."

On the following morning she and Richard met as usual at breakfast.

"Do you often hear from Minchley, my dear Richard?" was Mrs. Ferrier's first question to him. She asked nothing now without a purpose in it.

"No, seldom indeed. I begged so hard of Eva to let me have an answer to my last, that she did write yesterday, — but very briefly."

"Oh! And she persists in that noble self-denial which both you and I appreciate and admire so much?"

"Yes. Oh, how mistaken she is in me! She fancies — if any discovery should occur — that I should regret uniting my lot to hers. I cannot convince her that to have her would outweigh everything. I write and urge it upon her every day."

"Well, it's very honourable in her, and I have no doubt we shall find her parentage to be quite satisfactory. I'm going to make a few inquiries by-and-bye. You can tell her so. And I've no doubt we shall make a delightful discovery."

Mrs. Ferrier had no belief in the sincerity of Eva's hesitation. The girl knew she

had got poor Richard safe, and thought fit to appear self-denying. Richard's mother felt a bitterness towards the young woman out of all proportion to anything she had ever previously felt in her life. Let all due allowance be made for her. This unwelcome affair had come to turn into bitterness and anxiety the happiest portion of her life.

Richard had come safely out of the dangers of the war, — dangers which he need never encounter again. With a good name, a good property, good looks, and withal a hero's laurels, there was hardly any family which could count itself dishonoured by an alliance with him. There was hardly any prospect for him that she was not justified in forecasting. And now — now, just when she thought herself sitting down to a life-long feast of happiness, a bitter draught of disappointment and disgrace was put up to her lips to be drunk. Richard was going to out-fool the maddest matrimonial fool of whom Mrs. Ferrier had ever heard. In bygone years she had felt afraid lest Mr. Nicholas, her brother-in-law, should marry his cook or housekeeper, and so deprive Richard of all his expectations. Poor, unassuming Mrs. Cheek little knew of how much suspicion she had been the object. Now, indeed, Mrs. Ferrier would have been only too glad if uncle Nicholas had been alive to support her with all the influence his money would give him.

However, fate had made her self-dependent; and the dependence need not prove a vain one.

She had bethought herself of a way, curious but safe, in which she might reach the unknown gentleman whom her brother-in-law had beheld in the moonlit parlour of Scarlington House. He was, no doubt, to be identified with one of the five several doctors named by Charlotte. Mrs. Ferrier called to mind the popular disposition to bestow the doctor's degree upon all who practise medicine. Possibly none of the five were "doctors" in strict form of speech. Our friend was no such medical maniac as poor Lady Anne, but she was acquainted with one eminent physician in Leamington. And he, at her request, lent her a catalogue of all the medical men in existence throughout England. She was not long in turning it over. Messrs. Progg and Starver were dead. Doctor Stuffington — Mrs. Ferrier's acquaintance himself informed her — was still in lucrative London practice. He had always borne an unblemished name, and could hardly (our friend considered) be the hero of that horrible night.

The names of Messrs. Waxworth and Lacy were still on the list of surgeons; and nothing particular of good or bad was reported about them. A London directory revealed the abodes of the three gentlemen; and with this information, so rapidly and so easily gained, Mrs. Ferrier walked away towards one of the best of the Leamington streets.

There was a house, with sundry portraits — photographs, and of other kinds — in the windows and about the door; and to this house Mrs. Ferrier betook herself. Arrived there, she asked to speak with Mr. Dashwell.

Mr. Dashwell presented himself at once. He was an artist, whom Mrs. Ferrier, by seasonable patronage and recommendation, had laid under gratitude to herself. And he was now, unconsciously to help her towards the great discovery.

"Mr. Dashwell," she said, "if you are disengaged, might I speak to you in the room at the back?"

That room at the back was a painting-room. Mr. Dashwell eagerly led the way. He set a chair for the lady, and awaited what she had to say.

"Mr. Dashwell, I know you must be busy, and I won't keep you very long. I suppose you've plenty of work on your hands?"

"In a great measure, thanks to your kindness, I get on pretty well; Mrs. Ferrier. I assure you I don't know how much to thank you for it."

"Well, well, Mr. Dashwell, I'm truly glad to hear you are succeeding. Now I come to ask you to do me a great favour."

"That, Mrs. Ferrier, I feel to be quite impossible. After all you have done for me, any return I could make would be only a very poor payment of a debt."

"I'm going to put you to the proof at once, Mr. Dashwell. I want you, if you will, to sketch a fancy scene for me. I'll just describe it as it's written down here; and then you'll see exactly what I mean."

And Mrs. Ferrier pulled out of her work-bag a written paper, and prepared to read it. Mr. Dashwell took up a pencil and some paper, to write it down as she read it.

"But, first (you won't ask me to give any reason for it), but I should be glad if you would not mention it to any one — not to any one. I'm quite prepared to pay any sum you think fit."

"Mrs. Ferrier, you may be sure that I won't dream of naming it to anybody. As to payment, you distress me by speaking of it; only too happy, I am sure, to serve you in any single thing."

"Very well, I'll take you at your kind word. I'll read the description of what I want drawn. You'll think it a very odd fancy in me. However, here it is."

"A parlour, with the moonlight streaming in through the open French window." Mr. Dashwell wrote down those words, and waited for what was to follow. "The parlour otherwise in darkness. At the window, and looking out of it, a man carrying a child in his arms. Outside, and close to the window, a woman, in the shadow of the parlour; a tall screen somewhere near the window; and a statue of a Moorish slave, or some such figure, with a basket of flowers." That, I think, is all, Mr. Dashwell; and a very nonsensical idea you must think it, I am sure."

"Not at all, Mrs. Ferrier. A very striking idea. Very picturesque indeed, with a strong dash of the mysterious in it. Is the picture to have any title? or must it be left to suggest a title for itself?"

"Why, I think, Mr. Dashwell, you may as well put a name to it. You can call it 'The Secret Infanticide.' Yes, that will do very well. But I must again beg of you not to name it to a single soul."

"Most assuredly, Mrs. Ferrier. Do you want to have it done quickly?"

"Every hour, I may say, is of consequence to me, Mr. Dashwell. But I want three or four copies of it; three at the least."

"Hm! that 'll take some little time. Suppose I were to photograph it? You might have any number of copies then, you know."

Mrs. Ferrier caught at this suggestion with eagerness.

The scheme she had in view, if not already guessed at, may be very easily explained.

One of the five medical men whose name she had got from Mrs. Walsh was (probably) the man whom her brother-in-law had seen on that memorable March night in 1838. Of those five, two were dead; three were surviving still. If the actor in that dark transaction were yet living, it would surely shake him out of his wicked secrecy to be suddenly informed that the horrid affair was not forgotten even now. Sending him a picture of the affair would be much more startling than attacking him by a written accusation. It would leave him with no knowledge as to the exact insight into the guilty secret obtained by the sender. It would involve no acknowledgment that the inquirer stood in need of proof, and knew not on whom to fix the guilt.

He would at once assume that the un-

known person who had rescued the infant had at length fixed the guilt where it ought to rest; and he would be ready and eager to purchase secrecy as to his own share in it, by revealing the name and condition of his employer.

But what if he were one of those two doctors who had since died? Even then, those men who received it would recognize the parlour they must often have seen. Indeed, they should be favoured with names and places to remind them; and any suspicious circumstances which had crossed their notice in Scarlington House would be brought very forcibly to their memories. However, it was most earnestly to be hoped that the hero of that evil night was amongst the living, and not the dead.

Mrs. Ferrier thought how useful it might be to produce her pictorial appeal at any time, and at the shortest notice; so she begged Mr. Dashwell to get all completed without any delay. He promised to satisfy her impatience as nearly as he could.

"This is Saturday," he said; "and I could do a little at it to-morrow. I think I may promise to bring you them on Monday morning, Mrs. Ferrier."

But a few days before, Mrs. Ferrier would have been greatly grieved at the thought of inducing anybody to labour on Sunday.

But her devotion to the great object of her pursuit had pretty nearly (for the time being) extinguished every other devotion. If repeating the Liturgy backwards way on, or playing a game of cards in her pew, would have availed to detach her son from Miss March, I greatly fear that her end would have reconciled even to means as outrageous as these.

She passed a weary two days after her visit to Mr. Dashwell. Sunday was now no more a pleasant day to Mrs. Ferrier. She felt that Sunday was Miss March's day. It was the day on which that baleful influence was free to work, unchecked by any counter-influence of her own.

She could not enjoy being alone with Richard. For the one topic on which he was most anxious to talk was just that one upon which she could only speak warily and deceptively.

Just about noon on Monday, Mr. Dashwell came in to announce that his work was completed.

"I thought, Mrs. Ferrier," he said, "that you would like me to give them into your own hands."

"Certainly, Mr. Dashwell; and thank you a thousand times."

Mr. Dashwell had not much troubled himself with the reason for this lady's odd whim.

He thought it most probable that some novel had taken a firmer hold of her fancy than she was willing to confess; or that she was even meditating a novel of her own, and gathering in a few choice horrors for its embellishment.

He had executed his work exceedingly well, and had brought with him two dozen photographs of the scene as suggested.

The plate he would either keep or destroy, as Mrs. Ferrier was willing. She desired that it might be destroyed. And once again she urged payment upon him, he declining as before. And with a final expression of thanks on her side, and a final promise of secrecy on his (both entirely sincere), the interview ended at once.

Left to herself, Mrs. Ferrier took out three of the photographs (they were small in size); and enclosed them severally in three large envelopes. Those envelopes she addressed, one by one, to each of the three practitioners; to wit, Doctor Stuffington, Mr. Waxworth, and Mr. Lacy. Inside each envelope she wrote, in as masculine a handwriting as she could assume, —

"If you would keep from the knowledge of the world the affair of which this picture may remind you, you will act wisely in communicating with *H. S., Post Office, Warwick.* Remember *S—g—n House, Fulham,* and the night of the *seventh of March, 1838!*"

Mrs. Ferrier then carefully stowed away the remaining photographs in her most private drawer. As carefully did she place the three letters in her pocket; order a fly to wait on her as speedily as possible; and, as soon as it was ready, drive over to Warwick, and to the post-office. There she deposited her letters in the box, and gave a brief direction to the postmaster, —

"If you get any letters for '*H. S.*' Mr. Stamp, may I beg of you at once to send them on to me? Pray remember '*H. S.*' and send them under cover, by all means. Don't let anybody know but yourself, if you can help it."

"Certainly, ma'am. I'll take care you see them. And there'll be no likelihood of anybody knowing. I'll see to it, ma'am."

For Mrs. Ferrier was highly popular with her inferiors in station. Proud people very often both merit and obtain this favour. And our friend felt her advantage in this respect very vividly just now. As far as she could see, to trust Mr. Stamp

was the better and safer course. If she called or sent for the letters, she or her messenger might be watched and traced.

By the arrangement she had made the chance of discovering her identity with "H. S." would be decidedly diminished.

This was on Monday, the 9th of June. Accordingly, the morning of Tuesday, the 10th, brought all her three letters to their respective destinations in London. And Dr. Stuffington, of Brook Street; Mr. Waxworth, of Wimpole Street; and Mr. Lacy, of New Burlington Street,—all (pretty much at the same moment) received each a large letter with the Warwick postmark.

Doctor Stuffington was in ill-health, and temper to correspond. Bestowing just one glance at the photograph and its title, he set it down as a piece of stupid satire, designed by some homœopathist. For homœopathy was to Doctor Stuffington what Popery is to Mr. Whalley. Without so much as looking at the written paper inside, he tossed envelope, photograph, and all into the fire; for he enjoyed a fire in all but the very hottest weather. And I doubt if, when a day or two had elapsed, he so much as remembered the matter. He certainly never spoke about it. Mr. Waxworth sat for some minutes turning from the picture to the letter, and back again, with a strangely puzzled amusement. He finally put both in his pocket. Mr. Lacy looked at them in a bewilderment which (to look at his face) had more of trouble than of pleasure in it. He was a little late in setting out on his visits that morning, and somewhat absent and embarrassed when he did.

After he had cleared away the cases which pressed most for attendance, he walked to Charing Cross, went into a stationer's, and wrote a letter, which it may be our privilege at once to read. It was,—

"H. S. may look for the desired information within a few days."

This was all he wrote. He placed it in the post-office, and took a cab, giving to the driver no more definite direction than "Stepney."

To Stepney, therefore, he was driven. He dismissed the cab somewhere in the Commercial Road and turned into a by-street which led in the direction of the river, on foot. He walked into a neighbourhood which (except by saying that it lay close to the Thames) we need not particularly describe.

Very near the shore there stood a long,

low, one-storied range of building, detached from all the houses near it, and surrounded by an iron railing. On the front, which stood back from the street by some yards, was an inscription which told you that this building was Lady Scunthorpe's House of Refuge.

Lady Scunthorpe was an excellent lady of fortune and of rank, who, more than 120 years ago, had herself retired to that grand universal refuge which, sooner or later, is opened for us all. But while on earth, and (as the inscription made known) in the year 1714, she had established and endowed this Refuge; providing for eight poor women, who should be received and maintained therein; and also for one or two officials, for the better preservation of the charity.

At that time Stepney was a pleasant country village, enlivened by the great city so near at hand. But now the once secluded Refuge was encompassed by the town.

It was well known that the ground which it occupied would, if set at liberty, produce a sum which might maintain thrice the number of those who now received its benefits. And equally well was it known that, if good Lady Scunthorpe could have foreseen so altered a state of things, she would have prepared and provided for such an extension. But her trustees felt bound by what she had said in 1714, not at all by what she would have said in 1856. And Lady Scunthorpe's eight old women—and never more than eight—continued, by their antiquated costume (costume of housemaids in the reign of Anne), as well as by their rural-seeming Refuge-house, to tell of the time gone by. Otherwise, Lady Scunthorpe's trustees were patterns to all such bodies as theirs. The eight old folks had their rightful share of the bequest as it stood, and were always considerably treated.

Mr. Lacy rang the bell at the iron gate, and, on its being quickly answered, expressed his desire of seeing Mrs. Beakham. The portress, probably the youngest and nimblest of all the eight, at once admitted him, and showed him to Mrs. Beakham's door. Mr. Lacy was very quickly inside of it, and face to face with the woman he had come to see. Each inmate of the Refuge enjoyed two small rooms. It was now near one o'clock, and Mrs. Beakham was watching over the fire the saucepan in which her dinner was developing itself. She looked to be about sixty years old. She had the face and air of one who in life has known

much of the rough, and little of the smooth. Her visitor hastily put his hand to his breast pocket, as if to assure himself that something was there, and then he spoke at once.

"You don't remember me, Mrs. Beakham, I suppose?"

"Why, sir — why, really I — why, deary me — can it be Doctor Lacy?"

"Yes, Mrs. Beekham, my name is Lacy."

The woman looked pleased. Mr. Lacy's countenance hardly denoted any reciprocal pleasure, but of his own accord he proceeded to sit down.

It was a plain, comfortable room; and amidst the modern monotony of houses and streets, Lady Scunthorpe's home was, as far as eyesight went, a Refuge to all who so much as looked at it. Mrs. Beakham gave one or two progs with a fork at the contents of her saucepan, then covered it up again, and with a real welcome in her face sat down in a chair herself.

"Well, to be sure, sir, to think of seeing you here! It really looks to me just like old times."

"Does it, Mrs. Beakham? I dare say I shall make it look a little more like old times when I tell you what I've come to say, though perhaps you can guess what that is, Mrs. Beakham?"

"No, sir, that I'm sure I never can," said the woman, more puzzled by the angrily suspicious tone of his words than by the nature of the words themselves.

"You *can't* guess?" went on Mr. Lacy, exactly like a counsel attacking a refractory witness. "Oh, very well. No great necessity that you should. I'll tell you. Do you recollect, Mrs. Beakham, paying a visit to a certain house in Fulham, late one night, more than eighteen years ago, when I had the great honour of receiving and entertaining you there? Do you remember the little affair which occasioned your visit, and in which (though I don't come to talk about *that*) you rather took upon yourself too much?"

"I remember what it was, sir — yes, of course;" and the woman looked as if she did not thoroughly understand him.

"Very well, Mrs. Beakham; I never thought you behaved very well to me in cutting the matter so short as you did. But I never thought until this very day that you had done anything worse. But I find you have been doing a great deal worse. You have talked about the matter to others."

"To others, sir! No, never. Never once to a single soul, if you'll believe me, sir. Never once in all these years!"

"Now, now, my good woman! if there be

one thing which I detest it is — a useless untruth. *I know* that you have gossiped about it. And there's no telling who may know it, or what steps they may take in consequence of it. You'll have yourself to thank if the excellent people who manage this Refuge hear of the matter, and take it into their heads that you're not a proper person to remain here."

"I'm sure, sir," said the woman, who was crying now — "I'm sure, sir, if there's a single creature as knows of it, it isn't through anything I've said. And it'll be a very cruel thing if I am to suffer for it, after all these long years too."

"So then, Mrs. Beakham, you persist in saying that you never said a word about the matter to any one?" and as Mr. Lacy said this, he put his hand into the pocket of his coat, and held it there, as if its next movement were to be regulated by the woman's reply. That reply was a simple repetition of the previous denial.

"There then, Mrs. Beakham. Just look at *that*!" and with these words he whipped out of his pocket and placed full before her the photograph which that morning had brought him. "Yes, Mrs. Beakham, that pretty little picture was sent to me this morning in a letter from Warwick, but from *whom*, you ought to know better than I can. Now tell me again that you never talked to any one about it."

"Indeed, sir, whether you chose to believe me or not, I never did. But what does this picture mean, sir? It's a picture of what happened — and yet you see, sir, it isn't."

"Of course, Mrs. Beakham. It's just such a fancy picture of the matter as a person would draw who got hold of the right story by the wrong end, do you see? If you couldn't quite hold your tongue about it, why, you'd better have told it all right out. They needn't have made us both so much worse than we ever were. I hope you're flattered by that likeness of yourself, as given in this precious picture. Charming countenance, isn't it?"

The artist, unknown to them, but known to us as Mr. Dashwell of Leamington, had been guided by the nature of the subject supplied to him, and had made the woman at the window look as hideously murderous as you can possibly imagine.

"Well, sir, it's a wicked shame, and it's too bad, whoever has done it. I can only say again that I never did tell anybody; and, as you say, I shouldn't be likely to make it so much worse than it was, if I did."

Heavy as appearances weighed against

her, Mr. Lacy was beginning to think that Mrs. Beakham spoke the truth. But how, in that case, could so many of the details be known?

"Mrs. Beakham," he said, "I don't accuse you of intentionally doing any mischief."

"No, sir, surely not; for it's I that should be first to suffer, you know. But you said just now that I had displeased you in something or other I did at the time. I really didn't know that you'd any fault to find with me."

"Why, it wasn't fair and open of you, Mrs. Beakham, though in itself what you did might be all very well. You took the child away of your own accord, and without asking me. That was not proper behaviour to me."

"The child! Why, sir, I laid the poor little thing on the table, as you told me when you asked me to come into the dining-room,—surely you remember, sir. I never touched it afterwards, and for aught I ever knew, she may be living there still."

"Upon my word, but you act the part of innocence uncommonly well! But you'll not quite argue me out of my own senses. Why, woman, what is the good of your persisting in this? You had a glass—your glass, filled several times, and in different manners—in the dining-room. Then—and I quite coincided with you—you said you had had enough, and would go. You did go. I waited just to put the decanters away, and then I went to speak to a certain person up-stairs. Then I went down into the little parlour, and found the child gone. I could only suppose that you had gone up-stairs after me, a thing which you had no right to do; that you had heard a few words which passed between that other person and myself, and carried the baby away. What else could I possibly think?"

"Sir, you surprise me so much that I feel as if my wits were going. When I left the dining-room I walked straight out through the parlour. I never so much as looked at the table where I left the child."

"Well, Mrs. Beakham, the greater fool I am in believing you, the greater your wickedness in deceiving. But really and truly, I must and do believe you."

"You may indeed, sir, though I oughtn't, perhaps, to wonder if you don't. But oh, sir! what are we, both of us, to do? And who can be contriving against us after all these years? And what does it all mean?"

"I came here to get you to find out for me. Don't be frightened, as if we were in any danger. There's no danger if we both hold our tongues. What can be charged

against us? Just let me repeat the thing to you, Mrs. Beakham:—More than eighteen years ago, you (being a monthly nurse) and I (being a doctor, wanting more practice than he could always get) were very frequently brought together. One day I came to tell you that a lady wanted to adopt a child—to adopt a child from its birth; that if you could find any mother willing to part with a child from its birth, there was a handsome reward to be divided between that mother and yourself. Don't look as if you were before a judge. Where was the harm in that? The charity which thinks no evil enforced me to believe—enforced me to believe now—that the lady did this with the full knowledge and consent of all who had a right to know or to object. The secrecy was only to beguile the world; and who is the world, that it is to pry into our affairs, and ask whether we adopt other people's children or not? Well, you happened to have a client very suitable for our purpose. We refused—though she would hardly come into the plan on any other terms—to let her know how her child was to be disposed of. Plainly, this picture is not of her contriving, for she could not guess without a miracle at the manner of our doing it, and she never could follow you to see. However, we planned it all, as you know, as we had a right to plan it. The key was to be left in the garden door, and at about six o'clock in the evening you were to go and fetch it, locking the door outside, which I conclude you did. About twelve o'clock you brought the baby. I met you at the French window, just as this admirable picture represents me. But instead of having any baby in my arms, I only held a large bag stuffed with old things, and the money inside them. You know you were frightened of being robbed; and, moreover, did not want your husband to know how much you had earned. Then we had some talk. You were afraid of walking home, and I told you it was all nonsense, and added some good advice—I trust it did not quite fall to the ground—as to taking good care of the money after you had got it home. Then I asked you into the dining-room to get some refreshment. And I suspect all your fright about going home was nothing but a hint that you would like a glass. Well, that is all we know, if I am to believe you. In some unaccountable manner some person has got hold of the story, though, as I said, by the wrong end. Now as long as we are both quiet we cannot be molested for our share in the matter. If we begin inquiring and excusing ourselves, of course

we as good as confess ourselves in the wrong. Don't you quite see that, Mrs. Beakham?"

"Why, yes, sir; of course I see whatever you see, sir."

"Just so, Mrs. Beakham, and you are wise in doing so."

"But, sir, who could have taken the poor little child, and what became of it?"

"I have my reasons for thinking that the child afterwards — not many months afterwards — found her way into the very same house. Until just now I supposed that you had taken her back to her mother; that the lady, whom I need not name, had afterwards changed her mind, and (through you) had adopted the little thing. But now the matter looks stranger than any matter I ever could have imagined. I'll try very carefully to ascertain who is moving in it now, and whatever I hear you shall know. And now, Mrs. Beakham, I'll say good morning."

And Mr. Lacy went out. Mrs. Beakham resumed the preparation of her dinner — a dinner which her neglect had spoiled beyond repair. And I trust that Mr. Lacy's visit may have been the herald of no more serious disaster to the ex-monthly nurse.

Her visitor went away, not altogether sure what notice he should take of the threat so strangely conveyed to him that morning. Should he take no notice of it at all? The safety of such a course only be established by a more complete knowledge of the exact extent of "H. S.'s" information. Should he endeavour to ascertain, in the first place, who "H. S." was? That might only end in breaking down the screen of uncertainty which yet protected himself. One or two things were clear enough. His unknown correspondent had got hold — though very wrongly and imperfectly — of the awkward affair. That person, imagining he (or she) knew a part of it, was trying to frighten him into telling the whole of it. How had the affair, so carefully shrouded in darkness, ever got into the light — even such distorted and discoloured light as this? Again, with what motive was the unknown person at Warwick seeking to terrify him into confession?

Mr. Lacy, instead of returning westward in any omnibus, took a cab for the journey, that he might meditate the two questions at leisure. Who had whispered abroad, in such perverted fashion, the secret of that bygone March night? Not the real mother of the child; not the false mother of the child: not any person to whom their secret might have been voluntarily confessed or

incautiously betrayed; for in that case the picture would have embodied the truth, not so frightful a distortion of the truth as made the actual guilt comparative innocence. Mrs. Beakham he felt he must acquit of having effected the mischief by her tongue. Somebody (unlikely as it appeared on other grounds) must have witnessed the scene, and misunderstood its real nature. One of the servants must have been wakeful and suspicious on that night. Personal fear, or the consciousness of some secret of their own, might have kept the spectator silent both at that time and afterwards. But how account for a silence maintained so many years being broken at last? The curiosity which had laid dormant for eighteen years should surely have slept peacefully for ever. And this thought carried Mr. Lacy on to the second question which it concerned him to solve, — With what *motive* was the startling appeal made to him? With a wish to bring the guilty to justice? One actuated by that desire would scarcely appeal to the supposed criminal himself. "H. S." could never seriously have meant the appeal to signify, "Come, confess and be hanged, as you deserve!" *Money* was, in all probability, the strong and simple motive of it all. Mr. Lacy knew the folly of complying with such extortioners as "H. S." would probably prove to be. He had known instances in which a compliance with the first demand had, from the confession of guilt involved in it, empowered the extortioner to go on with increasing rapacity and with growing assurance. Assuredly the fear which lays a man, guilty or innocent, a prey to extortion, is the best possible illustration of the saying that "nothing is so rash as fear." Mr. Lacy was not rash, because he was not timid.

"No, Mr. 'H. S., Warwick,'" he said, as he re-perused the picture and letter in his cab; "or, as I am half inclined to think I ought to call you, *Mrs. 'H. S., Warwick,'* for I fancy I detect a lady's hand as well in the writing as in the whole idea of the thing. No, my conscientious madam, you had better have kept in your pocket the money this photograph must have cost you. Not one farthing would you ever get out of me, not if you could hang me for refusing, as very likely you think you can."

There was still time to send off a second letter to the subject of this wise resolution. It might be odd that the note promising a further communication, and the promised communication itself, should both arrive together. But the practical advantage of shortening the suspense would fully com-

pensate for that. So Mr. Lacy, in the same place in which he had written his morning's letter, dashed off another to the same address. It was quite as brief as the former, and was as follows:—

"Will '*H. S.*' be so good as to state the exact nature of the information desired in his (or her) letter? Address—'*Wm. Lacy Esq., New Burlington Street, London.*'"

Mr. Lacy felt happier when he had put this letter into the post. "Clearly," so he thought, "my photographic friend must come to the real matter now. Thursday's post will bring me a Warwick letter, demanding so many pounds as the price of secrecy; and Thursday's post, moreover, will take back to Warwick just this rejoinder:—'If Mr. Lacy is annoyed by any more attempts at extortion, he will put the matter into the hands of the police.'"

But, alas! how miscalculated we often find those arrangements which appear perfect wisdom at the time! While Mr. Lacy's letter was still lying in the box where he had placed it, he was brought to regret the having written it. He was led to look on his wise stroke as a piece of short-sighted folly. We will tell how that happened; not that we need feel so great an interest in Mr. Lacy, but because we desire to show, link by link, the chain which was drawing after it such important issues to our story.

About half an hour after posting his second letter, Mr. Lacy met, on foot in the street, his fellow-surgeon and friend, Mr. Waxworth. Mr. Waxworth had succeeded him in the confidence, never long continued in the same quarter, of Lady Anne Somerby in Scarlington House. But that was years ago; and any little professional jealousy which might have arisen therefrom had long since vanished away.

Mr. Lacy would have very much liked to know if his companion had ever heard any rumours of the affair so wickedly distorted by his photographic friend. But prudence kept him silent. They exchanged a few words—of no concern to us,—and were on the point of separating, when Mr. Waxworth, suddenly arresting his friend's departure, put his hand into his coat pocket.

"I want you," he said, "to look at something that came to me by post this morning. Look here! It's a queer subject, but uncommonly well done. I've no idea who sent it me."

And Mr. Waxworth placed before his friend a duplicate of the picture which was then absorbing all his thoughts. He had presence of mind enough to betray no previous acquaintance with it.

"What can it mean?" he said.

"I'm sure I can't tell. But you can look at what accompanied it." They were now in a very quiet street; and Mr. Waxworth handed the other surgeon a verbatim copy (name excepted) of the menacing inquiry which had so disturbed himself.

"What a fool I have been!" he thought. '*H. S.*' was in doubt upon which of us to fix; and I've just gone and enabled her to fix upon me. I must try and get Waxworth to write a letter just like my own."

Mr. Waxworth pointed out the names and dates that professed to assign a place and time to the pictured tragedy.

"I suppose this must be Scarlington House that is meant," he said; "it was just about that time that I used to attend Lady Anne Somerby. What a rascally piece of impudence! is it not? Pray, have you had one of these things sent you?"

"Well, I can't exactly say" (for it would not be safe to tell a falsehood which the course of events might compel him to retract): "I was in a hurry this morning, and didn't open all my letters before going out. I shall see presently."

"Why I ask is, because you once visited at Scarlington House. I remember you said you had found Lady Anne a very lucrative patient. So she was, as long as one could keep her. But what do you think this vile thing can mean?"

"Mean!" oh, I felt sure—I feel sure—that it's just an attempt at extortion. That's all."

"Well, I think so too. Of course I know there isn't a shadow of foundation in the story. Lady Anne is dead; and where Mrs. Campion is nobody seems to have known for years and years past. Else the thing would be more their concern than mine. As it is, I think I shall just put it into the hands of the police. What do you think, Lacy?"

"Why, I don't think I would do that just now. You see, the party calling himself '*H. S.*' does not say a word about money. There is no direct attempt at extortion. That, no doubt, will come by-and-bye. I'll tell you what I would do if it were my case;—what I *shall* do if I find any such letter when I get home to-day. I would just write and ask '*H. S.*' to be so good as to explain what was wanted—exactly what was wanted. Then, most likely, you'll get a formal demand for money; and that will be full matter for a charge of extortion."

"Certainly, certainly; what you propose has something to recommend it. I'll con-

sider about it." Here Mr. Waxworth looked at the photograph again.

"There's one rather odd thing, Lacy (if I'm not taking up too much of your time); and that is, though I'm sure no such thing as this ever happened in Scarlington House as I knew it, yet I keep looking at this picture as if (somehow) it were not quite new to me; as if I had dreamt the thing, or had read it in some story-book long ago. Well, we shall meet to-morrow at St. George's, you know; and perhaps I shall be able to tell you then,—not that it signifies much." And then they parted for the time.

Mr. Waxworth went away, in doubt whether he should follow Mr. Lacy's advice, and try to entrap "*H. S.*" into an overt attempt at extortion; or whether he should follow his own first impulse, and place the picture and letter in the hands of the police. Eventually he did neither, and took refuge from the conflict of opinion in the comfortable alternative of letting the matter alone.

Mr. Lacy went home, not by any means well pleased with himself, and heartily wishing that Thursday morning was come. On Wednesday he met Mr. Waxworth on a professional matter at the hospital. When the business which had called them there was over, Mr. Waxworth brought up the subject of their yesterday's conversation.

"Well, Lacy" (they were now in a room appropriated to medical consultations, and were quite alone together), "did you find a *fac-simile* of that thing when you got home yesterday?"

"Yes, I actually did. And I treated it as I told you I should. I wrote and asked the wretch—whom I more than suspect of being a *she-wretch*—what he or she wanted."

"Perhaps you were right. However, I doubt whether I shall take any notice of the thing. It's too contemptible, whoever is the doer of it. By the way, Lacy, you remember my saying yesterday that I fancied I had heard a story somewhere, of which the picture reminded me, but could not recollect how or where?"

"Yes, I remember you said so." And Mr. Lacy's look of genuine interest encouraged the other to go on.

"Well, it flashed upon my mind just as I was getting into bed last night. I very well remember now. My sister, who visits at Minchley now and then, was telling me—I don't know how long ago—of a manuscript she had been allowed to look at there. She said the names and places were all left out in it, but that it *professed* to be a true story

(I dare say it was a bare-faced make-up after all, but my good sister won't hear of my saying so). She favoured me with a fragment of it second-hand. I'll just epitomize to you as much as I remember of it. It seems that the gentleman who appears in the double character of hero and historian of the adventure—the gentleman who, as my penetrating sister says, 'writes as no mere story-teller would write,'—this gentleman (to call him so for the third time) once upon a time strayed into a garden for shelter from the rain, found himself locked in, walked up to the house, was somehow left by himself in a parlour—really I can't remember all the details,—went to sleep on the sofa, woke up in the middle of the night, and saw a man and woman standing at the window (just as in the picture, you know), with a baby whom they were about, between them, to kill. And then—I see you are interested in the story—the gentleman snatches up the baby, runs out of the house as hard as he can, and saves the child; and—a great deal more which I don't pretend to recollect. Now I'll tell you, Lacy, just what I think about the matter: this tale—which is very likely an extract from the *London Journal*, or some such publication,—this tale has got into the hands of somebody who believes it—actually swallows it. And that person, either in malice or (it may be) in sheer stupidity, has taken it into his head to fix it on Scarlington House. And they have found that both you and I, at one time, attended there. I intend to take no more notice of such an idiotic affair. But what do you think as to my theory?"

"I? oh, I think there is very much to be said for it. Yes, I should really say it must be the act of a lunatic. I'll tell you if I hear anything more of it."

And Mr. Lacy was glad to feel he had not betrayed himself to Mr. Waxworth. He now knew that the secret so carefully guarded had been known all along to somebody who, for motives not easily fathomed, had never made his power felt until this moment. The matter was far more mysterious, far more perilous, than it had seemed at any former time. What would Thursday's post bring with it now?

Mr. Lacy (he was a bachelor, as he deserved to be)—Mr. Lacy was seated over his solitary cup of coffee on Thursday morning, when the double rap, at once longed for and dreaded by him, was heard throughout his house. In half a minute more a letter from Warwick was lying before him.

Of a certainty his judgment had not been at fault in forecasting the sex of his unknown correspondent.

Mrs. Ferrier, now confident that she had got the right fish on her hook, felt less necessity for concealment and manœuvring; and this letter had been written in her natural hand.

Mr. Lacy turned it over once or twice before opening it, almost as if it had a will and purpose in itself, and he were beseeching it not to be too hard upon him. Then he dashed it open and read it, as we will read it:—

“Warwick, 11th June, 1856.

“H. S. replies at once to Mr. Lacy’s letter. What she desires to know may be stated in very few words. She wishes to know *whose child* that was which was found under such extraordinary circumstances on that March night in the year 1838. If Mr. Lacy will enable H. S. to ascertain that, he will be troubled with no further inquiries, nor will any annoyance be given him on account of the very strange part played by him that night. And if Mr. Lacy will take the trouble to indicate some way by which this discovery may be made, without compromising himself, he may rest assured that his name need not, and shall not, be ever mentioned in connection with this affair.”

Mr. Lacy read this letter over two or three times, and sat a long while musing over it. “It might have been worse,” he reflected. “Really, ‘H. S.’, considering her opinion of me as a murderer, writes in a very conciliatory tone indeed.”

I really fear that Mrs. Ferrier’s natural horror of the crime she supposed Mr. Lacy to have meditated, was somewhat blunted by the thought (if that infant had indeed grown up into Miss March) how inconvenient a life hers was. Let the mother who is without ambition cast the first stone at Mrs. Ferrier. Mr. Lacy was not without the means of informing her as to the origin of the child in question. But then they were at such fatal cross-purposes that he was not sure of satisfying her, even by the course she had indicated herself. Suppose he were to tell her the truth—as much of the truth as could be told? And after about an hour of considering and reconsidering, he took his pen in hand, and out of all the conflicting and contradictory schemes which, in that hour, had been coursing through his brain, there issued at last the following letter to his friend of the Warwick post-office:—

“Mr. — is willing, once for all, to dispose of the matter in question by giving H. S. an

answer to her last inquiry. He thinks it right to say, with whatever disbelief the denial may be received, that the real meaning of what was seen and heard on a certain night in 1838 has been totally misrepresented and mistaken. No such atrocious crime as that which is evidently laid to their charge was ever meditated or attempted by the persons concerned. On the contrary, they were deeply interested in preserving the child’s life, and, so far from thrusting it out of a desirable home, they were procuring it a good position in exchange for a very bad one. Mr. — will so far return good for evil— unjust aspersions by hazardous confidence—as to tell H. S. the name and residence, at that period, of the infant’s actual mother. Her name was Roberts, and she lived, when her child was born, at No. 8, Grove Terrace, one of the inferior streets near to Euston Square.

“Mr. — has now a further duty to perform towards himself and towards H. S. He protests against acknowledging himself bound, in this matter, by any kind of duty, or by any tie of interest. What he has declared may have been due to motives which, in the absence of knowledge, he must assume to be worthy of respect. Any attempt to draw him into acting or saying further will, he assures H. S., be met by total indifference on his part. He probably has not the power, and he certainly has not the intention, of aiding any scheme of discovery which H. S. may be setting on foot. All proceedings which may be taken, so as to involve attacks on his character, will be met by such protection to character as the law affords. This present letter, however sure H. S. may feel in herself, will never in any case be acknowledged by its writer. All further communications will be destroyed unread. Let H. S. just consider, if she meditates publicity, with what an improbable story she is about to appeal to the world. From the writer she will never hear more.”

Mr. Lacy penned this letter in a carefully artificial hand, and added neither day nor place by way of date. We need hardly add that he posted it himself, and upon the whole he thought he might put aside all fear of any mischief arising. He had not objected, since H. S. desired to know the real parentage of the baby, to put her in the way of doing so. He had an old grudge working in him, which will be better explained at a future period, and he felt this partial disclosure of the offending person’s secret to be only a just retaliation. Mrs. Ferrier was taken aback by the cool resolution of his letter, yet glad of such information as it contained. The inflexible refusal to tell any more, of itself proclaimed that the little revealed was probably true. The time was to come when Mrs. Ferrier was to look upon all this inquiring and discovering as the worst waste of her time that could have been. But at present the unwonted excite-

ment was very pleasant indeed. Apart from the happy issue to which she trusted she was coming — the complete and final severance of Richard and Eva — there was a sense of power and importance which engrossed her whole inner life, and was for the time a welcome exchange for the dull decorums in which an English matron must commonly dwell. She accepted the compromise which was the evident intent of Mr. Lacy to hold out to her, and lost no time in inquiring as to the existence and nature of "Mrs. Roberts."

We need not wait upon her proceedings step by step. After a week of rummaging in old London directories (bought or borrowed), and of writing to a private inquiry office, Mrs. Ferrier was put in possession of the ascertained facts, that, in the year 1838, and for some years afterwards, there had lodged at No. 8, Grove Terrace, Euston Square, a Mrs. Roberts; that the said Mrs. Roberts had always spoken of herself as a wife whose husband had deserted her; that, moreover, in the month of March, 1838, she had given birth "to a still-born child;" that she always appeared and spoke of herself as a most afflicted and unhappy woman; that, though straitened in means, she was never thought to be in actual want; that, moreover, some months before quitting her home near Euston Square (which took place in the summer of 1842), she was supposed to have got a considerable accession of income. It was further born in mind, that only a few months before her quitting that abode she had been visited with a dangerous illness, and that a sister from Wales had come up to nurse her. It was believed that she had since made her home with that sister, but in what exact neighborhood none who remembered these particulars of her London life were at all able to say.

Mrs. Ferrier, who had the manuscript very nearly by heart now, at once remembered that Eva had been found by Richard near Euston Square. That the Miss March whom uncle Nicholas had reared up out of charity, and the child he had snatched out of Scarlington House, were one and the same person, appeared almost a proved thing. Mrs. Ferrier went pitilessly on to disperse the glittering clouds, and show the bare, despicable, shameful secret which surely lay beyond them.

"Richard dear," she said, shortly after receiving the above intelligence — "Richard dear, I suppose you find Miss March adhere to her resolution? Well, don't be discouraged. I've not been idle all this week, and I do believe I shall have a delight-

ful surprise for you shortly. You don't think Miss March will renounce *you* if her birth should prove to be above yours?"

Richard's answer may be imagined — by every lover, at all events.

"Why," Richard's mother presently asked him — "why have the Ballows never tried to make out who Miss March is? I wonder at that."

"Because, knowing *what* she is, they think it a very paltry matter to trouble any person *who* she is. But, by the way, Mr. Ballow did tell me that a few years ago, when they were in London, he got hold of somebody who, he thought, would be really able to tell him something; but he said it all ended in his being about as wise as before, and I don't think he'll be in a hurry to move in the matter again."

Mr. Ballow knew that Richard's mamma looked unfavorably on his attachment to Eva, but he had no idea how intense was her dislike to it, much less was he aware of her desperate efforts to bring about some discovery which would extinguish her son's ardor in a burst of surprise and shame. So, in an answer to her urgent inquiry, he sent her a full and true account of the encounter, just four years before, with the red-faced woman of Eva's terrified remembrance. The history of that woman's behaviour, as detailed by herself, and as we have already narrated it (in the second chapter of this story), Mr. Ballow also imparted unreservedly to Mrs. Ferrier. This afforded strong confirmation of the brief confession vouchsafed by Mr. Lacy, for the name of Mrs. Roberts was a link between the two. Mrs. Ferrier now meditated how she might more surely lay hands on the yet unknown Mrs. Roberts. After a little considering, assisted by a remembrance of one or two novels she had at some time read, she obtained the insertion of the following advertisement in several Welsh newspapers: —

"If Mrs. Roberts, who was living at No. 8, Grove Terrace, near Euston Square, London, up to the year 1842, will apply to E. F., post-office, Leamington, Warwickshire, she may hear of something deeply interesting to herself, and may find her great loss repaired."

The month of June was well-nigh over before this notice met the eyes of the various readers in the Principality. Richard was at Leamington still, and his mother trusted that before he ran off to Minchley again Miss March's origin would be revealed in all its plebeian plainness. It was on the 2nd of June that she had started on her expedi-

tion to discover the source of Miss March, and it was on the 2nd of July that there came to her as "E. F.," &c., the following letter from Wales:—

"*Llynbwllyn, 1st July, 1856.*

"SIR [for, as was natural, the writer assumed 'E. F.' to be of the masculine gender].—Mrs. Roberts, who once lived in Grove Terrace, Euston Square, but whose home has for some years been in this place, has been greatly agitated by seeing the appeal addressed to her in the *Cam-brian Advertiser*. By her earnest desire—for her own intense feelings make her well-nigh incapable of acting for herself—I write earnestly to implore that the meaning of the notice may be promptly and fully explained. You will excuse my urgent request for speed, when I assure you that continued suspense is but too likely to be fatal, so afflicting has been her life, and so profound her present agitation. May I also ask you to extend your pardon to any undue omission in this letter, as I write it fresh from the surprise of a recent and startling discovery. Again entreating as full an explanation as you can afford, I am, your obedient servant,

"MORGAN DOWLAS.

"Please to address—'Rev. Morgan Dowlas, Llynbwllyn, nr. Carnarvon, N. Wales.'"

Mrs. Ferrier, just as anxious for a discovery, and almost as sick of delay, as the strange Mrs. Roberts appeared to be, was very willing to obey the appeal, and afford a speedy reply. That reply was a brief abstract of Mr. Ferrier's MS., and such further explanations of her own as may be guessed without being indicated. She had long given over asking herself whether she were doing ultimate good or ultimate harm. She was sure that Richard might be deterred from the moral suicide he contemplated if the girl's parentage could really be brought to light, and she was equally sure that, without such discovery, the wretched boy was self-doomed. The Guy Fawkes energy which had sprung out of her motherly fear had reacted upon that fear, and made it more desperate and despotic than at the beginning. And truly you might as well have proposed to a leopardsess to acquiesce in the loss of her cubs, as have entreated Mrs. Ferrier to consider the possible consequences of her present proceedings. Those proceedings were drawing to a crisis now. Two days after she had despatched her reply to Mr. Dowlas at Llynbwllyn, Captain Ferrier went away on a visit to his brother in Lincolnshire; and she herself received a second letter out of Wales, the nature and intent of which will be better explained by-and-bye.

CHAPTER VI.

MISS MARCH IS CLAIMED.

OUR Eva, not quite unconscious of all these inquiries, yet utterly unaware how keenly and eagerly they were pursued, had thoughts of her own at this time, which fully absorbed her mind and heart. In Mrs. Ballow she had a friend whose kindness never fell short, although there was not, on the great subject of all, a perfect sympathy between them. Mrs. Ballow really thought that Eva had protested, quite as much as she was bound to protest, against attaching Captain Ferrier's bright estate to her own birthless and nameless one. A man of six-and-twenty might be presumed to know his own mind.

Richard must have met scores of pretty girls who, had he looked for beauty only, would have met his advances with the most gracious readiness. He and Miss March had fallen in love because they verily suited each other. The match was made in heaven. It was folly, irreverent folly, to be so scrupulous about confirming it on earth.

Mrs. Ballow, full of this idea, had some talk with Eva on a certain day very early in July."

"My dear," said the elder lady, after they had been talking it over some time—"my dear, I can only say, again and again, that if you really do end by refusing Captain Ferrier, you throw away such advantages as not one girl in a thousand can ever look for. As to my daughters, I no more look to any such thing for them than I look to have them made empresses and queens. My dear, believe me, I am quite in earnest."

"But, dear Mrs. Ballow, do you not see that the 'advantages' of the thing are just what lie in my way? I may be suspected—I am bound even to suspect myself—of loving Richard for the very sake of his money and his position; although, indeed, I do not *think* it is so."

"I know it is not, my dear girl. I know you to be far too independent. I should even say far too proud, to think or care what your husband could give you, or what he could make you. So do heed what I say, my love. I may have no right to speak to you as a mother would; but, if you will believe me, I feel all a mother's interest in you; and I feel all a mother's sorrow, to think that you may be throwing your happiness away."

"Dear, kind friend!" and Eva got up

and threw her arms round Mrs. Ballow as she sat. "Dear, good Mrs. Ballow! I don't know why I should not look upon you as a mother. Until I knew you, poor, good Mrs. Check was the nearest approach to a mother that I ever knew; at least that I ever remember knowing; although the thought comes over me at times, that I once had a mother. When we were at the sea-side last summer, I fancied—as if it were a dream coming back to me—that I was once walking by the sea-side with a lady whom I called 'mamma.' Could it all have been a dream?"

"No, my dear, I think it very unlikely that it should. People dream of such things as they have seen, not of things entirely strange to them. It may be of immense importance to remember all you can. Great discoveries often arise from the merest trifles. Can you recollect no name—nothing about where you lived in those early days?"

"I fancy at times that I heard speak of my papa; that I was once told to come and see him; but that, as far as I now know, I never did see him. The little that I can remember besides we have talked over often and often. Certainly, I do not understand how I could have so much *idea* of what a mother is if I had *never* had one of my own."

"Well, my dear Eva, let us hope that all will come happily to light some day. Though I don't think much of Mrs. Ferrier's understanding, the inquiries she has thought fit to set on foot *may* lead to something, and good may come out of evil. Meantime, try and think that you have some sort of a mother in me."

"Yes, you are indeed in some things better than a mother. I look on you as a sort of moveable mamma, Mrs. Ballow. I can take you off and on, you know; and when you bother me about Richard, I feel I must really put you by for the day."

"You good, affectionate, silly girl!" Mrs. Ballow said, returning the kiss with which, as a lump of sugar after a draught, Eva concluded her latest speech. "You good Eva! you've brought nothing but good to us ever since we first knew you. From an own daughter we could have expected no more; and I know I shall be horribly jealous of the real mamma when she does come to claim you. However, I never was angry with you until now, my dear,—until now, when you treat Captain Ferrier in such a way. I am sure you love him, and I am sure he loves you. What should keep you asunder?"

"His mother—I know she is a proud woman. I once heard my dear, kind guardian, Mr. Ferrier, say so. I do not think she would ever be reconciled to it."

"Bless me, child! people reconcile themselves to almost everything when it can't be helped. And suppose she won't? The captain is not dependent upon her; and I would not say that you ought to give way to her even if he were. 'Therefore shall a man—,' you know we read in the very beginning of the Bible, my dear. As my husband very admirably puts it, you have on your side both nature and revelation—and just the stupid, obstinate pride of an old and foolish woman against you. It's not a polite way of putting it, I know; but it's a candid one, and it's a true one. The more you think about it, the more you'll believe me; so pray, my dear child, do think it over well."

It was, indeed, a matter to be well thought about; and Eva did think about it. We are not called upon to track her thoughts through all their windings during the remainder of that day. We are only now concerned with the result of them.

That result was embodied in the letter which, for its important influence on the future, we transcribe as it was written:—

"Minchley, 3rd July, 1856.

"MY DEAREST RICHARD,

"What shall I say that will assure you of my real feelings towards you? You almost accuse me—but I do not believe the accusation to come from your heart—of trifling with your affection; as 'knowing well that, use it as I may, it can never grow cold, or be lost to me. If you could but know how heartily I pray to be guided as to what is my true duty! Dearest Richard, you must surely know that—save a doubt lest I should be doing you a wrong in becoming your wife—there could not be on my own side the shadow of an obstacle in our way. But I have a purpose in this letter, and I wish to keep to it. I sometimes think—I am sensible how foolish and visionary may be the thought—that I shall not always be in such entire doubt as to my origin as I now am. I have a presentiment that—perhaps through the efforts which your mother is now making—I shall discover to whom I owe my birth, and to whom I rightfully belong. But I have a strong fear upon me that the coming discovery will not be for my advantage nor for my honour. You say your mother encourages you to hope that she is on the eve of a discovery which will remove the inequality between us. Think not, my dearest Richard, that I would question your mother's good sense, much less her truthfulness of speech; but her hopes and wishes, as she looks forward to our union, may unconsciously bias her understanding. But let me now tell

you what I think it is my duty to put before you. If any such discovery is made as entitles me to reckon myself at all your equal in birth and station — though of such discovery I feel no very lively hope, — then, if you desire it, I am yours, though against the opposition of the whole world. But it may well be that the secret will never be known, and that I shall live and die unaware how I came into the world. If you can, indeed, be happy with a wife whose origin you may never know, then, in that case, I will give myself to you, in the earnest hope that you will never find your noble, generous confidence to be misplaced. And I ask you to wait a year — you know, dear Richard, I am very young, — a year from this day, before we make up our minds that the secret is to continue a secret. And now, in the remaining alternative, I ask, in return, a promise from you. I ask you to promise, if, before the year be over, any discovery be made which decides my birth to be manifestly and entirely beneath your own, in that case, *never to seek, by word or by any other form of address, to induce me to become your wife.* On your giving me this promise, I, in my turn, engage, in case of a favourable discovery, or (after the lapse of a year) in case of no discovery at all, to become to you a loving, and faithful, and happy wife. Do not, dearest Richard, find fault with my decision. I am certain it is the best for both of us — or rather, the only right and just one which it was in my power to make; and do not, I entreat you, seek to alter it. I make it after much deliberation and anxious thought. My dear and generous protector, and your good uncle, always said that a departure from duty, though it many a time promised much happiness, was never known to fulfil that promise in the end; and I can trust that his experience guided him to speak truly. Be our future what it may, I am ever, my dearest Richard, your loving

“EVA.”

This letter was shown by Richard to his mother; not, as you will easily believe, that he intended to take her advice upon it, but that he might convince her of what she seemed so slow to believe in — the lofty integrity and self-denying uprightness of his beloved one's character.

Mrs. Ferrier could smile very pleasantly. She seldom looked at Richard but with a look which it was pleasant to behold; not thus pleasing, however, was the smile with which she looked at Eva's letter, and then away from that towards a letter which lay on her desk. That second letter was — to look at it — a long one. It had reached her but that morning, and seemed to have a great interest for her.

It may be a matter of surprise that Richard should not at least have made an attempt to acquaint himself with the course his mother's discoveries were taking. In

truth, he desired to shut out of his mind, in connection with Miss March, all ideas as to her origin, as matters unworthy to be entertained by him. Least of all did he desire his mother to fancy that he cared at all who Miss March might prove to be. It would make Mrs. Ferrier think that his decision might possibly depend on the issue of the inquiries; an idea so contrary to his real intentions it would be grossly untruthful to encourage for one moment; therefore, the progress his mother had made was quite undreamt of by Richard.

She read Eva's letter through, smiled at it in the doubtful manner described, and then gave it back to Richard.

“There! I suppose you take care to keep every scrap she writes to you. Well! so, of course, it is very proper you should. You'll be wanting to know, I imagine, whether I've succeeded in making any discovery. I'm not quite able to say. I think I shall soon have something to lay before you — something satisfactory, I hope — something which will make your marriage with this Miss March a very happy thing for all concerned. I should think you might as well give her the promise she seems to wish for.”

“If there is no other alternative I must. But I would not, even after this letter, but that you really give me hopes of a discovery in her favour.”

“I do hope for such a thing, my dear boy. Not to disappoint you, I would not talk of it as quite a certainty just now; a week or two, I trust, will really make it certain.”

“Then, dear mother, as the risk is so small, and as I know it will both satisfy Eva and be of some comfort to you, I will give her the promise she desires; though I shall try and alter one item in the conditions she proposes.”

And the post of that day carried out towards Minchley the letter which we copy as it was written: —

“Leamington, 4th July, 1856.

“MY BELOVED, MY OWN EVA.

“You think that I do not know you; and at the same time how ignorant your words prove you to be as to me! Can you suppose that I could consider *any* discovery, as to the people who might claim kindred with you, as one that could change you? Can you believe that any evil which might happen to you would not increase my devotion to you, and make it a dearer privilege to shelter and protect you than before?”

“But now as to the special purpose of your last noble letter. My mother gives me hopes — founded on how secure a basis I am unable,

because unwilling, to ascertain — that she is on the point of discovering something which will take away all scruple and hesitation from herself.

"For her own sake, and (you will believe me when I say it) on no other ground, I shall be glad if her wishes are fulfilled. But my expectation is, that though much may be made to appear probable, she will never succeed in making anything certain; and I am well content that you should live and die having never known any rightful name save that which it may soon be my joy to give you! But you ask me to wait for twelve whole months before we count ourselves safe from any unwelcome discovery. This is surely too much! Let it be six months, and I will endeavour to reconcile myself to the delay. But why say a word about any discovery that might not please us? It would be of no concern to me did it come. Why should it cost us a thought, when, indeed, it never may come?"

"I know, my dearest one, that you will endeavour to think kindly of my mother. She would not hesitate if once she knew you. She has been to me the dearest and kindest of mothers; and she will soon learn to bless the day — no distant one, I pray — which made you her daughter.

"Let me hear from you at once.

"Your ever-loving

"RICHARD N. FERRIER."

On Monday, July 7th, Captain Ferrier, who was still at Leamington, received the following reply: —

"Minchley, 5th July, 1856.

"DEAREST RICHARD,

"If you think we are justified in so doing, I will only ask you to wait for six months, instead of twelve. But I must entreat you to promise me that if within that time a discovery should take place, which exhibits my birth as decidedly below yours, you will abandon our engagement, and seek for no renewal of it.

"Your loving

"EVA MARCH."

Eva, on Tuesday, the 8th of July, received as follows: —

"Leamington, 7th July, 1856.

"MY DEAREST ONE,

"Most unwillingly indeed, and only reconciled to the act because I am therein obedient to your own earnest wishes, I give you the promise you desire.

"I engage, in case of no discovery being made at all, to wait until this day six months — that is, until the 7th of January, 1857 — before I ask you at once to become my wife. Also, in case of any discovery which, in your own words, may exhibit your birth as decidedly 'below my own,' I engage to look upon our love as

ended, and never to seek for its renewal, directly or indirectly, by any means whatever.

"Yours,

"RICHARD N. FERRIER.

"P. S. — I go to my brother's in Lincolnshire to-morrow (Tuesday), where I shall probably remain about a month. My address will be at 'Steelby House, Market Rushton (Lincolnshire).'"

Mrs. Ballow, protesting against so many scruples, in a case in which it had been better to follow inclination at once, admitted that these conditions were not very likely to interfere with Eva's ultimate happiness. So there was no more dispute between them on the subject. Just two days after the receipt of Richard's last letter — that is, on the 10th of July — Mrs. Ballow unfolded to Eva a scheme which might, at the present crisis, have much to recommend it, — nothing less than a purposed visit to Leamington.

"You see, my dear," she said, "the Captain's absence from Leamington takes away all shadow of impropriety from the thing. And Aunt Wettiman, who is there now herself, has often wished us to go; and Mr. Ballow thinks he really could get away next week. I should like you to go. You would be sure to meet Mrs. Ferrier somewhere; and the little foolish prejudice she has would soon be done away, I'm sure. Say you'll be ready to go on Monday, there's a good girl. You know this is only Thursday."

"I'll go with you if you wish it, but not on Mrs. Ferrier's account."

So it was settled that they should go on the Monday.

We may just remark that at this particular time not one of Mrs. Ballow's children was living at home with her. Alfred and Tom were both away, preparing for their destined professions. The eldest daughter was married and gone to India; the youngest was at a school in Brighton, and the two that came between them were completing their education in a *pensionnat* at Dieppe.

The departure for Leamington was, after all, adjourned from the Monday until the Tuesday. This occurred in consequence of a proposal made on the Saturday by Mr. Ballow himself.

When that gentleman came home to dinner on the day aforesaid, he brought in with him a goodly-sized pamphlet, which proved to be a catalogue of sale.

"Look here, my dear," he said, "this great sale is really to come off. It actually begins on Monday."

"What, at Gravelling Castle? Well, indeed I am sorry. The finest seat in the county to be left like a ruin, —perhaps to be pulled down!"

Gravelling Castle was that magnificent mansion of which mention has been made before, and in which was the portrait so strikingly resembling Eva. That likeness, so observable five years ago, would no doubt be still closer at the present time; for the apparent age of the young lady in the picture was just the age at which Eva must now have arrived. So Mr. and Mrs. Ballow settled between themselves, when Eva was out of the room, that they would attend the sale on Monday. It might be their last opportunity of beholding the mysterious picture. And apart from that, the sale would be a sight worth seeing. So on Monday morning they went together, leaving Miss March at home.

Gravelling Castle, notwithstanding its name, had nothing about it which recalled the feudal ages. Its oldest portion had been built by the first Earl of Horticult. That was the celebrated Sir Adam Gardener, of George II.'s reign, to whose love of travel and discriminating appetite we owe more than one description of mushroom sauce. Over and above that great invention, he turned his castle into a princely dwelling of the Palladian style. And now his latest successor (he was the Lord Fitzadam, who represented his county so many years), — his latest successor had reached the ruin towards which, for three generations, the house of Horticult had been steadily advancing.

It was hard to associate that sheltering avenue, that stately park, those delicious gardens, those priceless mosaics, those pictures (proclaiming each its painter), with such a vulgar word as ruin. But ruin was there. Ruin had brought in the multitude of people who began to frequent the castle on that 14th of July. It brought in, amongst other persons and things, the fly which held good Mr. and Mrs. Ballow.

They wandered about through the splendid rooms — splendid in their very abandonment and disorder. There was much in them to fascinate the eye. There were pictures, any one of which was food to any eye for a week. There were portraits epitomizing the history of an age. For instance, a portrait of Louis XVIII., presented, shortly after his restoration, by that king himself. This went for a very large amount. And so it surely should have done; for of all the things which had ruined the house of Gardener no single expense had done so much

as their unstinted hospitality to the exiled Bourbons in the early years of the present century.

Mr. and Mrs. Ballow, before they paid much attention to other objects, looked out for that portrait which Eva so wonderfully resembled. They found it before very long. Nor were they disappointed in its looks.

"Just as I said," remarked Mrs Ballow; "more like than ever now!"

"Yes, certainly," said her husband. "Eva has caught it up, to be sure. She is as like it now as ever she will be. Every day will help (as it passes over her) to efface the likeness, until she becomes an old, grey wrinkled woman, while this picture abides in all the bloom of its beauty. It is a strange thought, my love, that the works of man are often so far more lasting than man is himself."

The portrait, simply described as the "Portrait of a Lady," did not appear to be much regarded by any other of the beholders. There was likely to be no very keen competition for its purchase. It was not numbered among the pictures for which Gravelling Castle had been celebrated throughout Europe. It was by a nameless artist, and of a person quite unknown to fame. People stopped a little to admire the beauty of the countenance, and then at once passed on. Its reserved price was ten guineas. Mr. and Mrs. Ballow had some discussion whether they should not endeavour to secure it. Very probably there would be none to bid against them. Before they could decide what they should do, a third person, utterly unknown to them, had come up to where they stood, and was looking at the picture with an interest equalling their own.

He was a rather tall man, and, to judge from his dress, a clergyman. His figure was upright and slender; his complexion very dark; moreover, his hair was grizzled, and his features somewhat sunken. His age there was no means of reckoning from his appearance. He might be a careworn man of thirty, or he might be a somewhat youthful-looking man for sixty.

He stood looking very intently at the portrait for a few minutes, the Ballows being a little behind him. Then the stranger turned to an auctioneer, or auctioneer's agent, who stood near to him, and expressed his desire of obtaining that picture of the young lady. His words were, "I should like to have that picture of Miss Somerby. At what is it fixed?"

The Ballows wondered. He certainly

knew the name of the original. (It will be remembered that they had learned as much themselves in their previous visit to the castle.) How much more was it possible that he knew?

The man whom he questioned told him the set price, and also announced that he should presently expose it for sale.

The stranger stood still, awaiting the man's leisure; and our friends heard him say—for he seemed unconscious that any one was near him,—“I will have this at any reasonable price. I know of one whom it will comfort, comfort greatly, to see it again. I will have it.”

Mr. and Mrs. Ballow tacitly abandoned all idea of competing with him. And presently the picture he desired was put up for sale. The proceeding proved as formal as when congregations are asked to forbid somebody's banquets. At ten guineas it was going. At ten guineas it was—going. At ten guineas it was—gone.

The purchaser of it, evidently much delighted with his achievement, took out his card-case, and read to the auctioneer the address imprinted on it.

“Look here. This is where I wish it sent. To the ‘Reverend John Dykhart, Croxton Vicarage, near Cambridge.’”

The agent received his card, and promised accordingly.

The clergyman had turned away, with the apparent intention of leaving the room, when he suddenly turned round, and recalled the person to whom he had handed his card.

“I have just considered,” he said, “that it will be better for me to have the picture sent to me in London.” He took back the card, and wrote something in pencil on the reverse of it.

“This is where you can forward it,” he said, as he restored the card into the man's hand,—“Reverend John Dykhart, Golden Cross Hotel, Charing Cross, London.” And in a moment more he had walked away.

When Mr. and Mrs. Ballow got home that evening, they sent to borrow a Clergy List for the year 1856, from the rector of their own parish. It was promptly lent them, and they looked in it for the parish of Croxton, in Cambridgeshire, and for its Vicar, the Rev. John Dykhart. Croxton they quickly found; but its vicar was enrolled by no such name as Dykhart. His name was “Jonathan Poakham,” and he had held his living since the year 1815. Was it for his sake that the picture had been bought? This was a matter not to be at once resolved.

But the name and place were things to be carefully recorded, as possible aids towards unravelling the mystery of Miss March's birth.

On the following day they all three went off to Leamington. Aunt Wettiman had obtained for them very satisfactory lodgings, in close proximity to her own. She was somewhat intimate with a lady who also reckoned Mrs. Ferrier amongst her intimates. It was, therefore, not so surprising that the Ballow party, on returning from Warwick Castle on the Wednesday, found Mrs. Ferrier's card on the table, side by side with that of their mutual friend.

There was also a third rectangular patch of white lying side by side with the two cards; and that proved to be a note addressed to Mrs. Ballow, by Mrs. Ferrier. It invited our three friends, with all the urgency of polite hospitality, to take tea with Mrs. Ferrier on the following evening.

“There, Miss Eva!” said Mr. Ballow, having read the note after his wife, and handing it to Eva in her turn. “Now what do you think of that? Really we are getting on.”

“I think we shall soon have January here,” Mrs. Ballow said, of course alluding to the six months' delay on which Eva had chosen to insist.

“I'm sure,” said our heroine, “I would a great deal sooner not go. Can you not leave me at home?”

“No, no, my dear. Accept the invitation by all means. You must not put yourself in the wrong with Mrs. Ferrier. You must not appear to rebuff her when she really does make advances to you.”

And to Mrs. Ferrier's (for Eva felt the force of this argument) they bent their steps at the appointed time. It was Thursday, the 17th of July, and six o'clock in the evening.

They were not the first persons on whose account Mrs. Ferrier's door had on that very day been opened. Some time in the early afternoon, when Mrs. Ferrier was giving out her best china for the evening's tea, she had been interrupted by no less a person than the captain himself. In a letter that morning received by her he had told her that impending sickness in his brother's youthful family might possibly necessitate the cutting short of his visit in Lincolnshire. He now told her, by word of mouth, that the measles had, beyond doubt, made invalids of all her three grandchildren; and that he was now again for some time a sojourner at Leamington. Gladness at hav-

ing him somewhat sobered by the household troubles of her elder son, put out for a moment the great anxiety of all from her heart. But it very quickly overpowered her again. She did not countermand the evening's party, nor take means to acquaint Miss March with Richard's arrival. Events, she believed, were playing into her hands.

"It had better go on," she thought within herself. "It is better that all should happen when he was present. He will feel it, I know; he will feel it deeply. But it is infinitely the lesser evil of the two." And then Mrs. Ferrier examined a certain page in a railway guide, which for the last few days had been seldom out of her reach.

The party was not a large one. And besides the members of it whom you know already, I do not believe you need care to be introduced to any one. Some surprise, and, in one especial quarter, some embarrassment, was caused by the unexpected meeting with Richard. How it happened was quickly explained by the captain himself.

"Such infatuated folly!" his mother was saying to herself all the while. "I do believe he would be thankful to see all his relations, and myself amongst the number, all die of the measles together, if it would but give him an excuse for an hour's dallying with that fat girl."

We have said that if Eva's figure erred it was not on the side of leanness. And you might trust Mrs. Ferrier's eye to fix at once on all poor Eva's blemishes. If Miss March had been modelled after the purest type of beauty that a Grecian sculptor ever imagined, Richard's mother would only have dreaded and detested her the more.

"She is just a vulgar beauty," were her actual thoughts when Eva came into the room. "A fat bold face, looking very much as if it were painted. At least I should have given the boy credit for having more taste. And she does not look at all ashamed of herself; no, not in the least."

All this while Mrs. Ferrier was receiving and introducing, with every outward show of courtesy, the detachment of her guests which included Miss March. Though, assuredly, that young lady neither looked nor felt in any degree ashamed of herself; nobody at all unprejudiced would have ever pronounced her vulgar. All the company, not knowing beforehand the situation of things, were very much struck and attracted by her. The captain's behaviour very soon proclaimed that he and the young lady were as far as possible from strangers.

After some desultory conversation Rich-

ard happened to mention his having announced his sudden return to Leamington in a letter of that morning to his mother. "My mother," he said, "did not make sure of seeing me until I actually arrived."

Mrs. Ferrier, who was now engaged with the tea-table, interposed a remark of her own.

"Because, my dear Richard, I did not understand you positively to say you would come. I know you always do what you say for certain you will. — Yes, Miss March, you have no idea (*when he promises a thing*) how determined he is in keeping his promise."

And the lady glanced at a side-table on which, half buried by other things, lay the railway guide before mentioned. It surely had some comfort to give her, for she turned back with a much more satisfied expression to the cups and saucers before her.

The tea went on as satisfactorily as might be wished. Richard, to be sure, was not quite general enough in his attentions to the ladies; and Mrs. Ferrier looked furtively at her watch more than once. Otherwise no guest could possibly complain. When tea was over, none but the younger members of the party were disposed to saunter in the garden. For the weather, taking into account the time of year, was not by any means warm that evening. This Mrs. Ferrier felt to be a most unlucky dispensation. She would have had it genial enough for all to take to the garden; or else too inclement for any of them. She was very anxious that for an hour or so Richard should be securely under her eye. When he joined the junior portion of the company upon the lawn she was devoured with anxiety. Of course, she would have followed them had the thermometer been standing at zero. But a due courtesy to the elderly persons who remained indoors restrained her from doing so. Certain persons were to arrive at Leamington that evening, whose coming she trusted would give to her terrors a perpetual quietus. But their arrival would not take place just yet. They might be delayed even beyond the proper time; they might be hindered altogether. Railway carriages are but boards (even so are the directors), and engine-drivers are but men.

Irreparable mischief might be done while Richard and Eva, unwatched by her, were moving about the garden. To be sure, there was Richard's promise to delay decisive action for six months. Mrs. Ferrier was glad to have secured it; for any additional hindrance in the way of so mad a marriage was a thing exceedingly welcome

to her. But she had very little faith in her son's resolution. Much less was she disposed to trust Eva. She believed Miss March to be thoroughly capable of saying, "Come, dearest Richard, you cannot suppose I would wish you really to keep that ridiculous promise!" She was very likely at this very moment leading him on to say something which, let come what would, it would be difficult to ever retract. Mrs. Ferrier, although bodily seated on the softest of sofa-cushions, was morally upon thistles and thorns. She cast an anxious look at the window, then again consulted her watch, and seemed a little comforted.

The company, altogether unaware of the tragi-comic drama preparing, only thought Mrs. Ferrier a little uneasy and pre-occupied; a matter not to be seriously regarded. Their hostess plunged into the commonplace conversation going on, once or twice expressing her hope that the young people would take no cold.

The talk between Richard and Eva, could Mrs. Ferrier have heard it, would not, perhaps, have greatly reassured her.

The lovers walked apart from the other young people (there were about four or five of them), who had quitted the drawing-room for the garden. They stopped before a bed of sweet-williams, now just in their fullest bloom. The first to speak was Richard.

"Well, Eva, six months; and not one-half of the first of them gone yet. Every flower in this garden — every summer and autumn flower — must blossom and die, and winter must pass over all, before we can hope for happiness. Surely we have been very wrong."

"No, dear Richard. Believe me, I feel every hour more persuaded that we are doing right. There is your mother, you know. Perhaps, before the time is come, she will be a little less averse to receive me. Oh, I hope she may! Do not suppose, dear Richard, that I do repent, or ever could repent, of our engagement. But I hope, I trust, I may not be the means of estranging you from her."

"No, dearest one. Long before that — as I hope you will now see her frequently — you will be just as dear to her as I am. It was a good idea, your coming to Leamington. Only think as kindly of my mother's prejudices, while they continue, as you can."

"To be sure, dear Richard. She would be very unlike a mother did she not expect much greater things for you. And my whole life shall be devoted to showing her that, at least, I *wish* to be worthy of her.

Have you, since you came back to-day, heard her mention anything about — about her discovery?"

"No, not a word, my sweet one. I have no doubt it was what I expected from the first; some person has played her a trick, extorted money on promise of information. You can well understand that she does not like to talk about it."

At this moment they were joined by one or two other members of the party. So for some time, perhaps for half an hour, they continued in company with them, and had no more private conversation. But by-and-bye they somewhat fell apart again, and began talking as before, and in the same spot of the garden.

"I was going to say, Eva dearest," Richard began, — "I was going to say, when we were talking here a little while ago, that I believe my mother is now tired of worrying herself about any discovery. She must be satisfied now that it is, at all events, beyond her penetration. It was as well to let her alone while she was trying it. The occupation given her would be rather a comfort to her than otherwise. Let us agree to put the whole matter aside once and for ever."

"Yes, dearest Richard; you know it will be a pleasure to *me* to put the thing away. But it is not I who have any right to do so. But it must be all the same as to your promise."

"Yes, it must; I know it must. Well, may the six months be the shortest, as they will surely be the unhappiest, of both our lives!"

"They need not be unhappy, dear Richard. We shall each have a purpose to occupy us during that time. Yours, to take all fear and doubt from your mother's mind; mine, to help you as I can, and in every way to make myself less unfit to be your wife. Oh, Richard, look at those people coming up to us! Who can they possibly be?"

The intruders (angels would have been regarded as intruders then and there) comprised a gentleman and a lady. The gentleman was, if anything, rather the shorter of the two. He was dressed in black; and, though his look and manner did not betoken much refinement, was by no means repulsive in appearance. Scarcely as much could be said in the lady's favor. There was a tossing, swaggering air about her, which indicated, "Quarrels got up on the shortest notice." So much could be observed in her while she was yet at some little distance.

Mrs. Ferrier was conducting these two persons, who had not come through the

drawing-room, but round from the front of the house. As they came nearer and nearer, the lady's face came full in Eva's sight. It reminded her of a face which she had twice in her life beheld before. It was a very cross face, — like *that* face. It was a very red face, — also like *that* face. Its owner was a little in advance of the gentleman, her companion, and just abreast with Mrs. Ferrier. The latter lady came up and explained.

"Miss March, here are a lady and a gentleman exceedingly anxious to see you; and I believe they have something to tell you which you will be very much interested to hear."

Mrs. Ferrier spoke and felt with marked malevolence. But then, you see, she had caught Richard and Eva together, and alone. She did not know what might have passed between them; nor whether she had not come too late with her reinforcements even now.

Eva, the very opposite of a timid girl at most times, could never suppress a thrill of her nerves whenever crossed by so much as a remembrance of that horrible red face. And now, in its actual presence, she felt coming over her a horror that made her stagger where she stood. Richard's succor was afforded in a way that did not appease the angry alarm of his mother.

"Perhaps, Mrs. Dowlas," said she, "you will be so kind as to speak for yourself."

Mrs. Dowlas was never backward at speaking for herself, and she took the invitation most literally now.

"Now, then, Miss What-am-I-to-call-you! I've come ever so many miles, and all on your account. Haven't you got a civil word to say to me?"

This woman's voice and tone were such as always insured her an audience. Her greeting to Miss March arrested every ear in that garden, penetrated through the closed windows into the drawing-room, and awoke curiosity in even the premises adjoining.

Eva was frightened — appalled. That face and that voice had the magic to blot out fourteen years. For a moment all her youth and growth were as if they had never been, and she was again a child — again a desolate child — cast out into London streets, like a toy-ship launched on the waves of the Atlantic.

"I beg your pardon," she said to Mrs. Dowlas, "but I don't know you. Who are you?"

"Who am I?" returned the lady, with just the same voice as before. "Who am I? Why, I'm your own aunt! and you're

too proud to speak to me, I see. But I rather think it's I that might be too proud."

Here the short gentleman in black, who had been hitherto silent, interposed a remonstrance.

"My dear," he said, "I think this is hardly the place" —

"This is not the place, you great lout! when it's just you that have dragged me here — when it's you that said it was our duty to come! Hold your tongue, you jack-in-the-box, and let me manage the thing in a proper manner!"

By this time the drawing-room had discharged on to the lawn its wondering and listening detachment. So the Ballows were now on the scene. Mr. Ballow had no hesitation in recalling to his thoughts the face and voice which were still so fresh in his memory. And the owner of them was quick in recollecting him.

"My gracious me! why, here is Paul Pry again! You little stunted creature, you thought you had done the thing very cleverly in getting so much out of me as you did! But you're welcome to know all you like now; and you're going, perhaps, to know *more* than you'll like! I told you before you'd be very likely to get the worst of it! and now you have got the worst of it. At all events, young Miss is likely to have the worst of it!"

The gentleman — whom everybody, of course, knows to be Mr. Dowlas — now came and addressed himself to Eva.

"Miss March," he said, "I am sorry — very sorry — that it should have happened in this way. In fact, my wife is — not quite in her usual health, — is a little fatigued and agitated by her journey. Can we retire, and have this matter explained more privately? Perhaps Mrs. Ferrier would allow us to step into the house."

"Thank you, Mrs. Ferrier," said Mr. Ballow, anticipating that lady's consent. "But I rather think that we will not trouble you. Miss March shall come home at once with Mrs. Ballow and myself. You will, I have no doubt, excuse our going away so abruptly."

Mr. Ballow did not care if Mrs. Ferrier detected his real feelings in the sarcasm of his tone. That she had mischievously contrived the scene, with a view of bringing the utmost humiliation on Eva, would have been evident to the most stupid person in the world.

Mrs. Dowlas had made herself cough with the energy of her language, and she was just now disposed to silence; so she offered no protest against the plan of action proposed by Eva's friend. Thus the five persons,

taking some sort of leave of Mrs. Ferrier, began to move towards the house. Richard was loth to let Eva go.

"Eva dearest! remember I am the same to you, befall what will."

"Oh, Richard—oh, Captain Ferrier! indeed, indeed, you must try and forget me."

"But, Eva, stay! At least you promise me that you will let me see you to-morrow? Nay, I will not—shall not—let you go away without *that* promise at least."

"Well—yes—I will. Only, if I remember *my* promise, you also must remember yours."

And she tore herself away, and was gone. Mrs. Ferrier was on the lawn still, talking to her guests that remained. Richard came up to her and drew her away.

"Oh, mother, how had you the heart to do so? How could you assist in bringing this cruel blow upon her,—and upon me too?"

"My dear Richard! have you really lost your senses, beyond all hope of finding them? I bring this upon her! How could I have made her friends other than they are?"

"But, mother, do remember that you encouraged us to expect a very different sort of discovery."

"Goodness me, boy! what could I suppose, when I was told that her aunt's husband was a clergyman; and so he is a clergyman—a real clergyman. You're angry, Richard, and you'd make your mother the scapegoat for your anger. Let me tell you, it is not what I deserve from you. Perhaps you will one day acknowledge as much yourself."

And Mrs. Ferrier walked proudly away from him. She had thrown her last stake; and if she did not now prevail, she could never hope to succeed at all. To violate one's conscience for nothing is terrible. And this lady was frantic to think that, having done so much of which her heart could not thoroughly approve, she might have done all in vain.

"But I have done no more than my duty,—no more than my strict duty," she said again and again to herself. "A few months more, and he himself will be the first to say so."

Mr. and Mrs. Ballow, Miss March, and Mr. and Mrs. Dowlas walked away from the house towards the lodgings occupied by the three former. Mr. Dowlas was anxious to explain a few matters, and, fortunately enough, it was not the present whim of his wife to prevent him.

"I had no idea," Mr. Dowlas accordingly began to Mr. Ballow—"I had no idea that the matter would come upon you in this really sudden and somewhat public manner. I very much regret it, I assure you. I think it is scarcely my fault. I thought Miss March would be fully prepared for my arrival, and also for the reason of our coming. Was not that really the case?"

"No, indeed, sir. We had not the faintest intimation of your coming, or you would scarcely have found us as you did."

"Astonishing! Astounding!" replied the clergyman, with something of Welsh irritability in his manner. "Some days ago—a full fortnight ago—I sent Mrs. Ferrier a full account of all the circumstances which justified our coming. And the day, and everything else, was arranged since then. In fact, it was at Mrs. Ferrier's particular desire that we put it off until to-day. We *had* settled with her to come on Monday."

"Mrs. Ferrier," Mr. Ballow replied, "has acted in a manner of which, as she is, or ought to be, a lady, I would rather not speak any more."

"I was surprised to hear from her just now," resumed Mr. Dowlas, "that she had not prepared you or Miss March for this. At my particular request she has put into my hands a letter I wrote her about a fortnight ago. It contains all the particulars—all that I could ever learn—of this very strange and important matter that brings me here to-day. Do you think Miss March would like to read it as I have written it?"

Miss March spoke up for herself. They were now on their way home, and in the quiet streets, now rapidly growing dark.

"Yes," Eva said. "Pray do so; pray let me have it."

"Might it be better if I were to show it to your friends here first?"

"No; I beseech you let me read it all myself. I know, in their anxiety to save me any sorrow, they would soften many things in it which it would be far better I should learn the worst of at once."

"I suppose, by 'the worst' of it all you just mean *me*, Miss. Well, thank you very much for your polite compliment."

"My dear, I hope you won't fatigue yourself." And with this tender remonstrance yet in his mouth Mr. Dowlas, along with the others, arrived at the hotel in which he had secured a room for the night. The Ballows and Eva had a little further to go.

Mr. Dowlas put into our heroine's hand the letter of which he had spoken. Then, arranging to call the next day to ascertain

the course which Eva would wish to take, he, together with his spouse, left them all three to proceed on their way. Their lodgings were soon reached, and Eva, without saying a word, betook herself to her own room, and then they heard her lock herself in.

"I'll not disturb her now," said Mrs. Ballow. "Poor girl! Her feelings are fearfully excited, I can see. I'll go to her by-and-bye," which Mr. Ballow agreed would be the better course.

Eva, after she had fastened her door, set down on a table the lighted candle she had carried in with her, sat herself down on a chair close by, and took out the paper given into her hands by Mr. Dowlas. That the news contained in it would be painful and shocking to her, that it would oblige her, as she valued her own and Richard's faith, to surrender every hope of happiness, — all this was clear to her already. Why should she want the courage to read it? All (she felt) was over — over already. Nor could this letter tell her anything worse than, without it, she knew.

Yet she was very loth to begin it. She held it folded in her hands for one or two minutes. Then, ashamed of such childish trifling, she resolutely grasped and opened it, determined never to withdraw her eyes from it until the whole had been read by her.

It was, as may be imagined, much longer than any ordinary letter, but it was written in an epistolary form, and addressed to Mrs. Ferrier. These were its contents: —

"*Llynollyn, near Carnarvon,*
"3rd July, 1856.

"MADAM,

"With the deepest feelings of interest, and fresh from the astonishment with which recent tidings have affected me, I endeavour as best I may to give you a plain narrative of certain facts. Any defect in the manner of my recording it will, I trust be leniently regarded.

"I take up my pen with the sanction — nay, at the very earnest desire — of my sister-in-law, *Mrs. Roberts*, whose home for many years has been with myself and my wife. The agitation displayed by her when her eyes fell on the advertisement addressed to her by name has left her in a very nervous and dangerous state. She has, however, entrusted to me the task of acting for her, and as a necessary step, has confided to me the extraordinary facts concerning her child. Aware, from several sources of information, that her life had been much chequered by sorrow and disappointment; aware, from long observing her demeanour, that beyond the troubles which were known to myself some se-

cret grief was gnawing at her heart, — fully aware of all this, I never knew, until within the last few days, that the child born in such fearful misery had so much as survived its birth. I trust that so much evil may be found to issue in some good. But I am forgetting the duty I owe to yourself, madam, to my sister-in-law, and also to the cause of truth and justice. That duty, now before me, is to give to you, who have so much right to require it, a complete account of all the circumstances (as far as they are known to me) which have issued in this most unparalleled position just now occupied by us.

"You express a wish, madam, that my story should be as minute and full as I can make it. Such being your desire, you will, I trust, ascribe the length at which I am going to write to no unworthy motive. I accordingly begin with the very earliest events in the melancholy story now to be told by me.

"Mrs. Roberts was the younger, as my wife was the elder, daughter of Mr. David Roberts, who for very many years kept a respectable tavern in Liverpool. There is and has been for some years in Liverpool a church for the Welsh inhabitants of that immense city. It was my lot, about twenty years ago, to assist as curate in that church, and I was soon made intimate with Mr. Roberts, who, like myself, was a native of Wales. I could not help noticing — none could have helped it — the striking contrast between Jane, his elder daughter (now for many years past my wife), and Susanna, the younger, known to you in a measure as Mrs. Roberts. Jane possessed — indeed, she possesses it still — great energy of will, and an exuberant sprightliness in conversation. Susanna's timid spirit put her at very great disadvantage, both at home and abroad. She had just that disposition which leads a person, from a distracted anxiety to do right, to do many things altogether wrong. She was likely to become very helpless in the hands of any artful and ill-meaning man. I grieve to say that such a man at one time crossed her path. I also blush to say that he came wearing the mask of religion.

"The man to whom I allude was an Irishman. His name was Bryan O'Cullamore. He was a member of the Orange Society, and the advancement of its principals appeared to be his only definite occupation in Liverpool. He acquired much popularity by his vigorous exposure of the errors and corruptions of Popery, delivered, from time to time, at public meetings, and, moreover, kept up in the weekly newspaper of which he acted as editor. He found favour and patronage from several influential persons; amongst others, from the late King of Hanover, then (with the single exception of our present Queen) the next in succession to the throne. I mention this to show you that when first my poor sister-in-law gave an attentive ear to the proposals of Mr. O'Cullamore, she had no reason for imagining that she was entering on an engagement at all unadvised or degrading. You will not care, madam, to hear the details of a man's deceit and a woman's foolishness. Poor Susanna was

ready to believe anything told her by the man whom so many people in Liverpool regarded as a champion for the truth, raised up by God himself. Though I was willing to do justice to his zeal against error, I always felt him to be deficient in that charity which should ever accompany our extreme hatred of what is false. And subsequent events proved Mr. O'Cullamore to be an utter stranger to all which deserves truly to be called religion.

"Instead of openly asking Susanna to marry him with her father's sanction and in her father's presence, he persuaded her (giving reasons for it which ought to have stirred her suspicions at once) to follow him to London, and be united with him there. And this, poor foolish woman! she actually did. Her father was angry, not nearly so much at the marriage itself as at the deceitful and disgraceful manner in which it had been entered upon. And very quickly Mr. O'Cullamore's motives for quitting Liverpool thus hastily and secretly were fully apparent. He had involved himself in debts which he could by no artifices any longer keep out of sight. I fear I do him no injustice in saying that he would not have cared to discharge them had the means of doing so been given him. He certainly made no such use of the few hundreds which he at once acquired in right of my sister-in-law. She had something independently of her father. She was moreover of age by two or three years, so that her father could not have hindered her marriage, had it been all transacted under his own eyes. The marriage took place in London (in the church of St. Mary, Strand), in March, 1837. The certificate was forwarded, in order to set at rest some dreadful doubts which had arisen in the mind of my father-in-law; and after the first month of her married life Susanna seemed quite to have turned her back on her home and family. For months and months not so much as a line from her or from her husband reached her father or her sister. They were very angry with her. They little thought how deeply, all the while, her most wretched state was to be pitied. But much worse was still to come. One day, in the early autumn of 1837, a letter actually reached my present wife (then Miss Roberts) from her unhappy sister. It told a dreadful tale of deceit and cruelty. For some reason—to be only too well explained by-and-by—her husband had savagely forbidden her to communicate with her family; and, awed by his authority and alarmed at his threats, she had for many months abstained from doing so. But now the cruel embarrassment in which she stood overcame even the fear of her husband's finding her out. She was almost destitute. The money which her husband had acquired by his marriage with her he had engrossed to himself, and, whether he had spent or saved it, she was devoid of some of the common comforts of life. Nominally he lived with her still; but she never knew when or for how long he might be absent from home; and she added many more painful complaints of his unkindness and neglect. She

also said that six months more would most probably bring her a great addition to her cares, and she ended by throwing herself on the forgiveness of her father, whom she acknowledged she had wrongfully disobeyed and deceived.

"I regret to have to say that poor Susanna's piteous appeal did not meet with the response that would have been most worthy of a parent. A very small sum of money was sent to her; and Mr. Roberts was more inclined to punish the man who had deceived, than to succour and comfort his poor daughter, who had thus been made a dupe. But he was presently to find that a greater wrong had been done than had ever been imagined by him. He made some inquiries as to the life and conduct of Mr. O'Cullamore previously to his coming to Liverpool. By certain steps, which I need not trace one by one, he became acquainted with the horrible fact that Mr. O'Cullamore had a wife still living in Ireland; that therefore his marriage with Miss Roberts in London had been a pretence and a crime. Resentment overpowered sense of shame, acute as it was, in my father-in-law, and he put the law in motion at once. The wretched man was arrested in the lodgings in which (as poor Susanna's last letter informed us) he spent at least a part of his life. At the printing-office of the *Protestant Guard* he was known under another name, and might therefore have considered himself safe from pursuit. Why should I dwell on the details of a most wretched story? O'Cullamore was tried for bigamy, and sentenced to transportation for seven years. It is my painful duty to say that Mr. Roberts treated his wretched daughter in a manner which was utterly unmerciful, and not a little unjust. He chose to believe that she had been much more the accomplice than the dupe of her seducer; for, as regarded his intentions, he fully merited that detestable title. And Mr. Roberts was even cruel enough to think that she had known O'Cullamore's real position from the very beginning. I am sure he was wrong, and I earnestly but fruitlessly remonstrated with him at the time. He sternly refused to open his doors to his daughter—now in a condition infinitely worse than widowhood. Nor would he afford her any but the scantiest assistance in money. Miss Roberts (as perhaps it was her duty to do) shared in the sentiments and will of her father. I myself was living on but a small salary at that time, and I was awaiting such preferment in Wales as might justify me in completing my engagement with Miss Roberts.

"If, madam, you feel bound to blame my afflicted sister-in-law for what I am about to tell, may I not venture to say that the crushing weight of misery then upon her should also be duly considered? From the landlady of her lodgings my poor forsaken sister-in-law found very much kindness. And it was at her instance that, when the expected time of trouble drew near, she craved to be admitted into an asylum devoted to persons in her condition. She had discarded the name of O'Cullamore, to which she had never possessed any real right, and

which was now known as the name of an atrocious hypocrite and criminal, and she spoke of herself, in the lodgings near Euston Square, to which she removed about Christmas (1837), as 'Mrs. Roberts.' Of her husband she spoke as having deserted her. And if her landlady knew or suspected any more, she had the delicacy to act and speak as if in ignorance of it. But charity itself seemed to have turned its back upon this unhappy young woman — so much more sinned against than sinning. The hospital was for married women. She was but the victim of a villain. Representations of the real case were made to the managers of the institution. But against all which could be pleaded for poor Susanna there was this serious fact, that her own father — a thriving and respectable man — had shut his doors against her. Hitherto I have written of what, in a great measure, occurred in my own knowledge. I now come to matters which I have almost entirely gathered from poor Mrs. Roberts herself.

"One very cold day in the month of February, 1838, she walked down — so she tells me — to the hospital, which would, she still trusted, admit her within its walls. She was sent away with a refusal — a refusal not unkind in tone, but so decisive as to shut out all prospect of the boon being granted her. The managers were sorry. They were not disposed to doubt that she was morally blameless. However, they had a rule as to those whom they made partakers of their bounty. To relax that rule in one exceptional case would make it very difficult thenceforth to keep it with any due strictness. And anything which tended to afford the charity indiscriminately to vice and virtue would open the door to evils of the gravest kind. Such, in substance, was the decision of the managers of the house, delivered to poor Mrs. Roberts by the matron of the institution. She found seated in the same room a very decent-looking woman, who seemed greatly interested in her pitiful case, but who offered no intercession on her behalf, nor so much as said a word to her. My unhappy sister-in-law felt that now indeed her last refuge was gone. To what desperate act, poor afflicted creature! she might next have resorted, can never be known to any. She had quitted the building, and was beginning her painful walk homewards, when, before she got many yards, she was accosted by that woman of whom I have just spoken.

"The woman said, 'I'm sorry they won't let you in. What are you going to do?' Poor Susanna said she did not know; she had no resource left her in the world, and should only be too glad to die. The woman said, 'Don't fret yourself; I know of a good gentleman who will get you assistance. He employs me to go about and find poor women who require help as you do. Show me where you live, and I'll promise you, you shall feel very thankful that these folks would not take you in.' In such extremity, who would have turned away from friendship proffered in this manner? The woman went home with Susanna; promised that

she herself would attend her in the approaching time of trouble; and, moreover, provided a few things most serviceable at such a time. A day or two after she came again, and said that Mrs. Roberts might certainly calculate on the favour of her new nurse's charitable employer. That nurse announced herself as a *Mrs. Beakham*; but of the name or condition of the unknown benefactor for whom she was acting she never said one word.

"One day she asked poor Mrs. Roberts what, when her coming trial was safely over, she expected to do with herself. How did she expect, burdened with an infant child, to obtain any manner of livelihood? Susanna had felt so deeply the extraordinary deliverance from her immediate distress, that the troubles of the more distant future had little disturbed her. But now, suggested by the language of her nurse, the sickening truth flashed across her, that the safe recovery which might be in store for her would only carry her to meet new difficulties, new miseries.

"Mrs. Beakham set her future situation before her as darkly as it could be painted. In truth, it required no very sombre imagination to view it as a most hopeless one. And then the woman assured her that she might escape the destitution otherwise in store for her; might secure a comfortable, nay, a lofty position for her child, and might gain a fresh start in life for herself, if she would but consent to one act of sacrifice. Would she, in a word, give up her child to be reared by a rich lady and gentleman, who wanted to adopt a child from its very birth? Not all at once, but without any very great difficulty, she persuaded my sister-in-law, in her desperate situation, to consent to the sacrifice. Every precaution was adopted. The nurse took up her abode in the house. The landlady, who was nervous in times of illness, went out to pay a visit in the country. Mrs. Beakham had dropped a hint that the case would involve an unusual amount of suffering and danger.

"Very early in the morning of Wednesday, the 7th of March, 1838, Susanna gave birth to a daughter. In the course of the morning she was visited by a medical man. She can only remember that he was rather young, that he was very attentive, and that Mrs. Beakham spoke of him as 'Mr. Smith.' Some time in the afternoon the nurse told Susanna that it must be given out that her child was born dead; that she had provided a dead child to substitute for the baby she was to convey that night to its destined home. She was now, she said, about to consult with 'Mr. Smith' as to the exact time and manner of completing the arrangements. She went out, leaving Susanna in the care of a very deaf old woman, to whom (had she been inclined) she could scarcely have betrayed the affair now pending.

"Mrs. Beakham, for very obvious reasons, kept her patient quiet by repeated soporific draughts. She knew the nature with which she had to deal; and she was aware that the scru-

ples, hitherto effectually kept at bay, might interfere at the last and most critical moment. Mrs. Roberts was not all the while so stupefied as to be quite unconscious of what was passing before her. She saw Mrs. Beakham come into the room about eight in the evening; take from out of her dress a pocket, and hang it on a chair near the bed. Susanna, during a few minutes that evening, was left alone. She found strength enough to gratify the curiosity which possessed her. She had a strong craving to find out the name and position of Mrs. Beakham's unknown employers. In the pocket, which she contrived to clutch with her hand, she found a handkerchief and a large key. There was not a scrap of paper to give any such clue as she desired. Between ten and eleven Mrs. Beakham told her that she was now going to place the child in the hands of its adoptive parents. She said all she could to soothe her patient, and once more put to her lips the draught which was to lull her into stupor. Mrs. Roberts took the glass in her hand; begged Mrs. Beakham to let her have one last look at the baby, who lay in an adjoining room; and, while the nurse went out to comply with her request, poured the draught at once upon the carpet behind the bed. Mrs. Beakham again put on the pocket I have mentioned, took up the child, and went away. Poor Susanna—the deed beyond recall, and her senses no longer drugged—began to feel bitterly repentant for what she had done. She had bartered away a mother's joys before she had known one-half of their value. She could not undo the deed now; but she might, possibly, leave open a chance of undoing it at some future day. She might, perhaps, outwit Mrs. Beakham, and gain some knowledge of the persons to whom her child was to be committed.

"When Mrs. Beakham returned home, which was at about two in the morning, her patient feigned to be fast asleep. The nurse, who slept in the same room, was not long in dozing off herself. Then my sister-in-law again searched the pocket, which was hung, as before, on the chair. There was no key in it. The handkerchief was there, as before; and attached to it, as by some adhesive substance, was a small-sized letter. It was written on very thin paper; and, though folded, was not fastened up. Mrs. Roberts concealed it beneath her pillow, and determined to take the first occasion of examining it. She could not help thinking that accident, and not design, had placed it where she found it. Of a certainty Mrs. Beakham never, by so much as a look, intimated that she had missed it. My poor sister recovered; and, upon the whole, rather rapidly. Mrs. Beakham handed over to her the sum for which she had stipulated to part with her baby. It was enough to start her in some small way of business; at all events, to keep her from want for some time to come. In due time the nurse quitted her, the landlady having returned about the 14th of March; and she never saw or heard of Mrs. Beakham any more. It was after her departure that Susanna turned to the letter she had found.

As its thin paper might have denoted to her, it came from abroad. It was addressed to 'Lady Anne Somerby,' was dated at Constantinople, and its writer was a gentleman who signed himself 'Herbert Campion.' There was not much in it which, of itself, possessed any importance. Susanna afterwards parted with it, under circumstances presently to be described; but the constant perusal of it impressed nearly every word of it upon her memory. It addressed the lady as 'dear aunt.' It spoke much of the writer's wife, regretting the continued necessity for his absence from England; alluded, in ardent language, to the hope that he might by-and-by hear of his wife's becoming a mother. There was also some obscure reference to a certain fear and anxiety, known, it would seem, to Lady Anne herself, but not so expressly named as to inform every reader of its nature. The letter was directed to the above lady, at Scarlington House, Fulham. For months—years, indeed—Susanna continued in her lodgings, not venturing to take any one into her confidence; but torn by remorse at having sold her child, and by anxiety for that child's future destiny, she many a time set off, intending to discover Scarlington House, and, at all events, seek to know something as to her baby's present position; but she always felt fearful of betraying herself. Mr. and Mrs. Campion, if they were indeed the purchasers of her infant, would very likely treat her, did she molest them as but an extortionate impostor. She was provided with such a sum of money as, for a long time, would free her from all fear of destitution; and her father's heart so far softened towards her, that he, from time to time, bestowed some assistance upon her. Possibly, had she been compelled to work for a livelihood, she might have been spared from brooding over the wrong she had both suffered and done. Some time in the year 1840 she got acquainted with the wife of a baker, who had quitted Fulham to set up a shop near Euston Square. My sister-in-law, hearing whence Mrs. Krout (that was her name) had recently removed, asked her eagerly if she knew Scarlington House. Mrs. Krout answered that she had lived just opposite to it for years; upon which poor Susanna went into a hundred questions as to the house, its inmates, &c., &c.

"Mrs. Krout answered all she was able, but expressed some curiosity in her turn. She said, 'Well, I never thought Scarlington House at all a wonderful place myself. But, sure enough, there must be something funny about it. You're not the only person I've known who was devoured to know all about it. Just two years, last March, a gentleman—a real gentleman—though I could never make out who he could ever be—came and lodged for a week in my bit of a room on the first floor over our shop; and when he was there, all his talk—all he ever cared about—was to find out about the people in Scarlington House. I know he fancied that I told him all of my own accord, and that I did not see how keen he was at asking all about them. I declare there was not one thing,

whether about the mistress or the servants, or about the very physic sent in by the doctor, that he did not try to find out.' Such in substance were Mrs Krout's words.

"And when my sister-in-law ascertained that this mysterious visitor had come to lodge with Mrs. Krout exactly about the time at which she had parted with her infant, she felt compelled to believe that, whoever he was, he had in some strange way become acquainted, partly or wholly, with the dark transaction; and thence there grew in the poor woman's mind a fear lest the position she had procured for her child might be taken from her after all. But still her doubts and terrors led to no action on her own part. Late in the year 1841 her father died. Previously to this event—two years before, indeed—I had obtained the living I now hold, and had been married to his elder daughter. I met poor Susanna at her father's funeral. I had never seen her since her disastrous elopement; but sorrow and (as it struck me even then) secret self-reproach had effected in less than five years the changes due to five-and-twenty. To my great satisfaction, the injustice done her in her father's lifetime was not prolonged after his death; and she and my wife were left equal shares in Mr. Roberts's money. She was now beyond all danger of actual poverty. On the single Sunday she spent in Liverpool she happened to hear, in one of the churches, a very forcible sermon on the guilt and misery of continued deceit. The preacher—I was present myself—dwelt on confession and disclosure as in all cases, the only safe and happy course. Whether he would have applied his rule to so strange a case as Susanna's it may not be easy to say; but in her mind his counsel sank very deep. She made no attempt to confide in us. Unhappily, there was never that accord between herself and my wife which, between sisters, should exist. So Susanna went back to London, and once in full possession of her share in the property, she actually made a movement towards finding out Mr. Campion, and seeking at least a partial reunion with her lost child. She ascertained that he was employed abroad by the Foreign Office; also that he was about to throw up the duties he had for so many years undertaken, and was likely to return to England very early in the coming March. Bent upon an interview with him, Susanna contrived to find him at his hotel, within a few hours of his arrival in London. She believed that in his house her child had found a home; and, moreover, that the whole matter was done with his sanction and knowledge. Mrs. Beakham's words had seemed to imply as much. That Mr. Campion was himself the dupe of a plot had never struck my poor heedless sister. When she, summoning all her courage, told him why she had sought him out, he showed the utmost surprise and scorn; but on her producing the letter to Lady Anne Somerby, his manner altered to one of horror and fear. As soon as he could master himself he begged her to go home, and await further tidings from him. He was going down to Brighton, where his wife and (as he had

hitherto supposed her) his child were living; once there, he would mercilessly probe this story to the bottom, and if he found Mrs Roberts's claim to be just, he would at once restore her child into her hands,—so suddenly did Susanna find the matter taken altogether out of her own power. The next day but three brought her a letter from Mr. Campion, dated at Brighton. It told her that he had found her story to be only too well founded; that, heart-breaking as the discovery was, the proof was too complete to suffer him to doubt. He did not write to reproach Mrs. Roberts, but to arrange for placing the little girl in her hands. Of the child herself he would not be unmindful. She had, though wrongfully, borne his name. She was the only innocent partner in the guilty conspiracy; and he would give her mother such help towards bringing her up as she might in reason demand of him. He proposed sending the child, along with a trustworthy nurse, to a lodging-house (which he named) in Hornsey. There they might continue for two or three weeks; in that time, perhaps, so young a child would have partially forgotten her previous life. In return, he asked of Mrs. Roberts to promise that she would, by keeping the matter a secret from the public, spare him the misery of an exposure. And this promise Susanna promptly gave.

"I think, madam, I have now brought this painful story down to the period of my wife's sudden summons to London. Your own letter intimates that you are already aware how Susanna's dangerous illness was just at its height when the child was brought to her house; and how, in consequence, her daughter was lost to her again.

"When she recovered she went to the house in Hornsey, and there was informed that the young woman and the little girl had gone away several weeks ago. She came to the conclusion that the persons from whom she had demanded her child, had determined, after all, to keep her; and she now felt herself too weak, too cowed, too conscience-stricken, to make a second demand of the sort. Her sister's sympathy she did not care to seek; and my wife did not think fit to tell her—having no idea of its full significance—of what had happened in her illness; so it has remained a secret until this very day. What will be the issue of the discovery lies in the hands of a Wiser than ourselves. Meantime, let me assure you, madam, of my earnest wish to do what shall seem kind and just in this matter. Awaiting a further communication, I am, madam,

"Yours most obediently,

"MORGAN DOWLS."

And this was the end of the dreadful letter. Eva had kept her resolution. She had read it straight through without once laying it down. Her arm ached with holding it; but, as if a spell enthralled her, she kept it close before her eyes for minutes after she had read its very latest word.

From Blackwood's Magazine.

THE GREAT WOODS IN WINTER.

ON first changing from a civilized life to one in the wilds, a host of new sensations strike forcibly on the mind. The most artificial and elaborate cultivation of existence has been exchanged for the most simple; and the traveller is surprised to find how limited the actual necessities of life are, and how easily a man is able to be his own workman in everything in this primitive condition. The army of wants created by civilization, and the means of gratifying them, the results of combination and mutual dependence, appear very clearly in the comparison with this simpler mode of life. The complexity of our social system, and the effect of the division of labour in the former, contrast forcibly with the self-sufficiency, the complete independence of the individual, and his reliance on himself alone, in the latter. In life in the wilds, a man is compelled, not only to obtain daily food for himself in the most literal sense, but also to provide by his own labour every other necessary of life, and every comfort. He must procure everything, and do everything, by his own individual action. He is a compendium of all trades in his own person — his own builder, carpenter, and mason; his own butcher, baker, shoemaker, tailor. But one of the novelties which most forcibly and constantly impresses an Old-World traveller in a new unsettled country, such as the virgin forest and prairie of North America, is the absence of boundaries, the sense of the illimitable extent of country spreading out on every side without artificial obstruction to progress in any direction, the perfect freedom to wander anywhere and everywhere without restraint or fear of trespass. There are no walls or hedges, no rights of property to respect. And akin to this is the new feeling of the utter absence of law and conventionality. Every man is a law unto himself, and does almost without dread of interference, or even comment, what seems right in his own eyes. He consults no one as to the propriety of his conduct, and his actions are regulated merely by his own inclination or sense of right or expediency. But more impressive even than this consciousness of absolute and perfect freedom and independence is the sense of solitude which necessarily accompanies it. There is a solitude which may be experienced even in the busiest haunts of men — a loneliness amongst multitudes — felt by the friendless outcasts in some great city, where the very presence of unknown, unsympathising

crowds adds point and bitterness to the isolation, and causes the man who is "alone in the world" to feel more utterly desolate, more terribly solitary and companionless. But the solitude of the prairie and the woods is different to this — less painful indeed, and less despairing, but perhaps more awesome. When amongst the buffalo which crowd the plains in summer, and the bands of hunters and swarms of wolves which ceaselessly and unrelentingly pursue them; when the thousand pools and lakes are thronged with myriads of wildfowl, and their shores with the stilt-plover, the bittern, and the snipe; when the broods of prairie-birds flutter out of the long rank grass, or burst with loud whirr from the copses; when the air is full of its summer tenants, the swallow and the butterfly to charm the eye, and the mosquito and the gadfly to vex the body; when the hawk dashes past in pursuit of his quarry, and the crow caws as it flaps lazily by overhead; when the crane stalks along in the distance, and the prairie-dog and the ground-squirrel play about on the greensward; when the dry earth is musical with the chirp of the grasshopper, and the swampy ground seems to vibrate with the croak of countless frogs; — then, even then, while the animal world keeps you company with a goodly and joyous throng, and the hum of active business in the inferior creation resounds around, the sense of solitude is never absent. When the sun goes down, and the wolves announce the close of day in howling chorus; when the owls hoot and flit round in company with bats in the dim twilight, — the feeling of loneliness increases. Later yet, when all is hushed and still, and the crackle of the logs on the camp-fire is the only sound which breaks the perfect quiet, the sense of isolation from mankind grows more and more intense. For although, when the whole expanse of copse and prairie is visible in broad daylight, the rarity of man is striking enough, it is in the solemn noiseless darkness that the want of society is most keenly felt. But this sense of solitude experienced by the summer traveller on the prairies of North America, influential as it is, seems weak and small compared with the loneliness of the great woods in winter. Then the wildfowl have fled away from the fierce cold, the waters are closed with a lid of ice, and the only sign of life there is the Christmas house of the provident musk-rat. The bear has retreated to his hole, and is wrapped in his six months' sleep, and the beaver stirs not abroad from his conical hut on the river bank. The mosquito and the gadfly are dead, the leaves have fallen from

the deciduous trees, the mosses and ferns are buried deep beneath the snow, and the evergreen firs and pines are mantled in white. The silence of the woods is broken only by the chirrup of the squirrel, tempted by the sun from his nest in the hole at the foot of a pine, or the explosion of a tree cracking with the intense frost.

This utter want of even animal society, this absence or dormancy of life, I felt in all its awesomeness on one trapping expedition into the forests of the North Saskatchewan, in the Hudson Bay Territory. My companion and myself had fixed our winter-quarters on the borders of the great forest, at a lonely spot which had been named La Belle Prairie by the Canadian voyageurs, who had noticed the singular beauty of the place. Here, 80 miles from the nearest trading-post, we built a rough log-hut, and occupied ourselves in hunting and trapping with the Indians and half-breeds.

The winter was drawing to an end, but the cold was still unabated, and I determined to have a last campaign against the martens, the fishers, and the silver-foxes, which yield the most valuable furs. On my former expeditions I had carried all my traps, blankets, and provisions on my back, and had generally been compelled to return sooner than I wished, from the failure of my supply of food. I resolved on the present occasion, therefore, to take a dog-sleigh with me, to convey half a bag of pemmican, and thus hoped to be able to penetrate farther north than I had done before, where the animals I sought would be more numerous. I accordingly harnessed "Tigre," a faithful, knowing old dog, to a little sleigh, and, in company with a French half-breed named Bruneau, set out on my journey. Crossing the lake, about two miles in width, which bounded La Belle Prairie on the north, we entered the forest, which stretches far away towards the arctic circle. Although there was no path for us to follow, the trees were large, and did not grow very closely together, and we advanced rapidly through this and over a succession of lakes during the first day. But on the second our difficulties began in earnest. The timber in this part had been burnt by Indian fires, and had been succeeded by a close thicket of young aspens, while the ground was thickly strewn with great fallen trunks. Through this mass of vegetation we had to cut our road with axes foot by foot, to make a passage for Tigre and the sleigh. To add to our embarrassment, a dense fog enveloped us, so that we could see but a few yards ahead, and the sun, by which we steered our course, was invisible. After

working away half the day, and making but a few miles' progress with great labour, Bruneau expressed his belief that we were steering to the east instead of north. I was confident that our course was correct, but on appealing to a little pocket-compass which I carried, it also declared that we were marching due east instead of north. So firmly persuaded was I that we were following the right line, that I concluded the compass must have lost its properties by constant proximity to the iron of a knife which I carried in the same pocket. But Bruneau persisted in doubting my opinion, and the only way to decide the question was patiently to await the reappearance of the sun. We therefore camped at once, hoping for clearer weather on the morrow. The next morning broke with a bright unclouded sky, and when the sun rose, it made its appearance, surely enough, straight in front of us. The Indian instinct of the half-breed had been true; and Bruneau, who had hardly left his home in the settlement before he joined our party, and was little more accustomed than myself to wander in trackless wilds, had shown that inexplicable sense of direction which is so remarkable in the Red man and his half-brothers of the West. Forward again we started, changing our direction according to the new light we had obtained, crossing lake after lake, hewing down the aspens on the "portages," or portions of ground between them, lifting the sleigh over the fallen timber, and scanning with watchful eyes the surface of the snow for the tracks of game. Tigre dragged his load with difficulty, for the snow was deep, and so imperfectly beaten down by the snowshoes of the pioneer, that it was hardly firm enough to bear the dog's weight, and the recumbent trunks which crossed the path were serious obstacles for him to scramble over with his weighty appendage. On the third day, therefore, of this slow and toilsome march we lightened the cargo by leaving behind in *cache* a great part of the pemmican. But we had a thief to guard against. We knew that, however, carefully we hid our store, the rapacious wolverine would infallibly discover it, and as surely devour it. Now the wolverine, or North American glutton, called Kekwaharkess or Evil One by the Indians, is an animal of extraordinary strength and almost superhuman sagacity and ingenuity. During the winter he gets a living by making use of the labours of the trapper, whose track he diligently hunts for; and when he has found it, he follows it with untiring perseverance. When he comes to one of the wooden

"deadfall" traps, principally used for the fisher and marten, he proceeds to make a felonious entry at the back, and abstracts the bait with impunity. If an animal has been already caught in the trap he eats it, or wantonly tears it to pieces, or hides it in the bushes or at the top of some tall pine. He carefully examines anything left behind in a deserted camp—nothing escapes his curious investigation; and if it be found edible or destructible, it is demolished. In order to secure our bag of pemmican, therefore, from his clutches, we suspended it by a stout cord from the small end of a long pole, projected, after the manner of a fishing-rod, over a stout branch of a tree. The end of the pole from which the pemmican hung was too slender and taper to afford firm footing for the animal if he scrambled along it, so that he could not rest there to gnaw the cord in two, and the prize was too high from the ground to permit of his jumping up to it; and even if he should succeed in climbing along the pole, and drop from the point of it on to the bag beneath, this being flat and hard, and suspended in a horizontal position from the middle, would infallibly "tip up" and dislodge him, for his claws could get no firm hold on the smooth case of parchment which enclosed the pemmican. Having thus secured our supplies for future use, we again pursued our northward journey, and by evening reached a point considerably in advance of any we had attained in previous expeditions. Here the tracks of martens were tolerably numerous, and we resolved to fix our headquarters on the banks of a small lake close by, and commence trapping in earnest. The snow was quickly shoveled away with a snow-shoe for a small space, pine-boughs cut and strewn for our couch, a plentiful supply of dry wood cut and stacked up; and then, wrapped in our buffalo robes, we slept the sound sleep of the well-tired voyageur. The next two days were employed in making traps in separate lines several miles in length, radiating from the camp, the "walk" being extended at each journey. Being anxious, however, to obtain news of the party left behind in the hut at La Belle Prairie, I despatched Bruneau thither; and as the road was cleared, we expected that he would accomplish the journey there and back in three days. He set out at daybreak on the following day, and I was left with Tigre as my only companion. I immediately started on my "walk," and kept merrily at work all day, making fresh traps and penetrating still farther into the forest, retracing my steps to the camp at night. Tigre greeted my arrival with a cordial wagging of his tail,

to which I responded by giving him an ample supper, then replenishing the smouldering fire, raised a cheerful blaze, and cooked my own very frugal meal of fried pemmican. After emptying my dish of food—the frying-pan—I lit my pipe, and squatted on my bed of pine-boughs before the fire. As I sat and thought, while Tigre crouched by my side and thrust his nose against me and looked up into my face, seeking a caress, the sense of loneliness first began to oppress me. Darkness had set in; the moon, already past the full, had not yet appeared, and the lofty pines of the forest around me, their dark-green boughs decked with glistening snow-wreaths, towered up fairy-like in the bright starlight. The huge fire, sinking down in the snow on which the logs first rested, sent out from its trough of ice vast clouds of steam, which rose in a great column through the clear frosty air towards heaven, and almost hid the flames from sight. Not a breath of air rustled the dead leaves still lingering on the young aspens, or shook the snow from the flat, hard, widespreading branches of the firs. Not a sound broke the calm quiet of the night. The bay of the wolf, the sharp bark of the fox, the sad call of the whip-poor-will, or even the mournful cry of the loon, would have been a relief. But the wolf enters not the thick forest, the wood-fox was dumb, and the whip-poor-will and the loon had not returned from their winter's visit to the south. All was silent, motionless, and still. I heaped a pile of great dry trunks upon the fire, wrapped myself in my buffalo robe, covering my head from the biting frost, closed my eyes and composed my well-tired limbs for sleep. Weary as I was, however, and sternly resolved to compel the service of the fickle god of sleep, there was something which as persistently repelled him. It was not fear, for there was no possible danger to apprehend; it was not thought for the morrow, for my material wants were amply though rudely provided for; but I was oppressed by loneliness—I craved for the human presence. I longed with a painful, unspeakable yearning for conversation and society. Tigre, thinking I was asleep, crept quietly up, and lay across my feet close to the fire; and I turned off the robe from my face and talked to the dog, who, as if he appreciated my feelings, and was sensible of the same want as myself, stepped up beside me and uttered a sympathetic whine. Again I lay down, but with uncovered head, braving the keen air, although there was sixty degrees of frost; and my eyes wandered from the blazing fire at my feet along the snowy carpet

around me into the shadowy recesses of the forest, and then upward from the snow-decked feathery branches of the tall pines to their taper summits, and thence to the pale stars which glittered so coldly bright in the clear sky. As I gazed, wakefully, wearily, watching the slow march of Orion to the west, my thoughts strayed homewards —

"Towards its fountain upward ran
The current of my days."

Visions of dear faces and happy golden hours gone by came before me; and old associations, and the companionship of far-distant friends carried me away for a time from the solitude of the actual reality. A faint rustling, audible enough in the pure silence, caught my ear, and brought my mind back to the present, and my eyes to earth again. A mouse, tempted by the warmth of the fire, had ventured out from his winter's nest, and was nibbling with great zest the remains of the pemmican left in the frying-pan. I welcomed him as an old friend, and turned my head in order to watch him more comfortably; but this slight movement scared him, and he scampered hastily back to his hole. I covered my head once more, for my nose and cheeks ached painfully with the cold, and dozed away fitfully for a long time. Before long — not very long — a consciousness of increased light gradually broke upon my dulled senses. It was not sunrise, for, as I peeped out of my robe, my eyes naturally turned to my night-clock Orion, and I saw that he had not advanced very far on his journey. But the heavens were glowing with a brilliancy such as I had never seen equalled before. It was the aurora in all its glory. An arch of bright yet pale yellow light spanned the northern sky from east to west, and from the bow, rays of roseate hue of every shade, mingled with pure white beams, streamed up the zenith, ever changeable and varied; where at one moment a red ray flared up, a yellow or white streak flashed in place of it fitfully and uncertainly, yet increasing in lustre and brightness. Soon, however, the fires began to pale, and then died out, and the starlight alone lighted the scene. A third time I buried myself in my coverlet, and slept until the squirrels announced daybreak by their merry chirrup. I jumped up, blew with numb quivering lips the smouldering embers into a blaze; and when I had warmed myself thorough, had a hearty breakfast in company with Tigre and two little blue-and-white magpies, which, according to their

invariable custom, attached themselves to the camp, and now hopped boldly about, picking up crumbs, and even ventured to make a thieving raid upon the lump of pemmican. Then I tied Tigre to a tree, stuck the axe in my belt, shouldered my gun, and marched off to look at my traps. I could not, however, shake off the feeling of loneliness which had taken hold of me; I had never felt it depressing before on my daily journeys alone, but it disquieted me now. The trees creaked and bent with the strong north wind, the dry leaves rustled on the aspens, and the snow-wreaths shattered down from the firs. Not a living creature did I meet in my long day's tramp. I found the tracks of the wary moose freshly printed, but he fled far away at the sound of my approach. Even the rabbits and the partridges evaded me; for it is a marked feature of the American forest, that although the tracks of animals may be plentiful, they themselves are rarely seen. If the snow did not betray their recent presence, their existence would not be suspected; and the reason of this is plain enough — they are so invariably pursued if seen, so constantly hunted by man and four-footed enemies, that they become cautious and timid in the extreme. Any one accustomed to see the game of the Old World playing about in the presence of man, wonders at this invisibility. But the so-called wild animals of civilized countries are accustomed to see mankind, who are not bent on their destruction; they have a seven months' rest from persecution too. But in the wilds of North-West America the approach of man indicates certain pursuit. He is associated only with terror and death, for the hunter spares not — he needs all he can catch, and neglects no opportunity for slaughter. Thus the faintest sound scares the denizens of the woods, which instantly hide themselves.

Returning from my long walk at sunset with a most satisfactory load of furs, I felt a dreary anticipation of the coming evening; and thinking even a change of camp would be a relief, I decided to move it farther north, where marten-tracks were numerous. I harnessed Tigre, accordingly, to the little sleigh, and proceeded to a point where there was an ample supply of dead dry trees. I had but just completed the task of chopping the firewood, when I heard the soft tread of snow-shoes behind me, and Bruneau appeared striding through the trees, followed by several dogs. He had come a day sooner than I expected, having hastened back with the news that cranes and geese had already been seen passing northwards — a sure sign

that the thaw was close at hand; and it was therefore necessary to return to the hut as quickly as possible, for when the snow begins to melt, travelling is almost impossible, and we might be detained in the woods for days half-starved. One more look at our traps next day, then after skinning our victims we went early to rest, intending to commence our homeward journey about midnight. But we both — Bruneau tired out with his forced marches, and I from my wakefulness the previous night — overslept ourselves, and the grey light of dawn had begun to appear before we left the camp. As the sun gained power the snow began rapidly to soften. We were too late — the thaw had commenced. The hut was more than thirty miles distant, and the difficulty of travelling increased every moment. The melting snow adhered in great cakes to our snow-shoes, and accumulated in masses on the network instead of sifting through the meshes as it does when frozen and dry, so that we walked with great labour and embarrassment; each leg being clogged with a heavy weight. The parchment strips with which the shoes are laced like a racket, stretched and snapped with the wet.

The dogs could hardly move along, sinking up to their bellies at every step, as the frozen crust on the track gave way beneath their feet. At last, after an hour or two's toil, our snow-shoes broke down hopelessly, and we were compelled to stop and camp, hoping to resume our journey under more favourable circumstances in the evening, when the night-frost had hardened the surface sufficiently for it to bear our weight without the aid of snow-shoes, for these were now utterly useless.

The sun shone out warmly, and we stretched ourselves on our backs on the elastic couch of branches, and basked in the genial heat in pleasant half-sleep, so still and motionless that a carrion crow, taking us for a couple of corpses, swooped down with a loud hoarse croak, and came so close, in his eagerness to dig out our eyes, that his wings flapped against our faces; and thus rudely awakened, we started up with a shout, which caused the frightened intruder to see his mistake and sail hurriedly away over the tree-tops. When the moon arose, two or three hours after sundown, we again harnessed the dogs, and continued our harassing march. We were probably not more than twenty miles from the hut, but surely

never was an equal distance traversed with greater trouble and fatigue. We had cast away our broken "racquettes," and the crust on the surface of the snow, weakened by the heat, was only strong enough to bear our weight, with unshod feet, in certain places which had been sheltered from the full force of the sun. Here we stepped easily along for a few yards, and then the platform would give way, we crashed through to the ground, a yard beneath, with a jarring shock, and plunged up to the thighs in "slush." Through this we ploughed for a few hundred yards, slowly and painfully, panting heavily with the exertion, the dogs toiling after with the sleigh. Then came another firmer portion, and we stalked along it for a few strides, to be shaken to the marrow again by another break through, or had to turn back to help our four-footed fellow-sufferers, who every now and then lay down, unable to move their load through the adhesive snow-paste. Thus hour after hour, we struggled on, staggering, faint, and weary. The night wore on, and still we trudged away, until the early dawn found us on the shores of the lake, on the other side of which, some two miles distant, the hut was situated. But by this time we were so completely worn out and exhausted that we were unable to proceed another step, although so near the end of our journey, and were fain to light a fire and lie down to rest. We slept heavily until the sun was fully up, and then, somewhat revived by the rest, resumed our laborious task, and at last joyfully stepped on to the firm, well-beaten pathway that led to the hut. Glad smiling faces greeted us at the door with an eager welcome, for our companions feared that we might be detained in the forest by the sudden arrival of the thaw, and, tired of inaction, were anxious to leave winter-quarters as soon as possible, since provisions were falling short, and the time for setting out on our expedition across the Rocky Mountains had come at length.

A talk over our adventures, with breakfast and a soothing smoke, and then Bruneau and myself, with nodding heads and blinking eyes, in the broad noonday, thankfully retired to bed, and slept on and on, with hardly a break, until the next morning.

W. B. CHEADLE, M.A. M.D.,
Author of 'The North-West Passage by Land.'

From the Spectator, 25 August.

FRANCIS JOSEPH I.

If there be a Sovereign in Europe whose career is envied by humbler men it surely cannot be the career of Francis Joseph I. Keeping his thirty-sixth birthday last Saturday, he could look back upon what? A reign of seventeen years as a mighty potentate, nearly every year of that long period being marked by some disaster, and not one marked by a genuine success. If the gods look kindly down upon a brave man struggling with adversity, their most encouraging smiles must fall upon the head of this descendant of the Kaisers. It has been his hard fate that the accumulating bills of hundreds of years fell due in his time, and that he has been called upon to pay, under penalties, the debts incurred by his House to humanity. He could not pay, and execution has at length followed judgment given long ago, execution in part, not altogether, for there has not yet been a receipt in full. Italy and Germany have got something of what was owed, not all; but Hungary, so cruelly used, and Bohemia, Moravia, Galicia, the many races in the valleys of the Danube, these have yet to be paid. It has been very hard on Francis Joseph, but the sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children, even unto the third and fourth generation. Nothing in Holy Writ, alas! or out of it, is truer.

Look back a moment through that vista of seventeen years. What changes have occurred in Europe since, on the same day in 1848, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was declared elected President of the French Republic and Francis Joseph was proclaimed Emperor of Austria. It is a famous date in contemporary history. How different have been the careers of the two men; how closely they are linked together; what favours has Fortune showered down upon the middle-aged gentleman who faced a convulsed nation and a suspicious world as President, and how she has frowned upon the youth who left his Jesuit tutors to ascend the throne of Rudolph of Hapsburg at a moment when his empire was in the throes of a revolution? Victory, glory, power, prosperity have lighted up the path of one for seventeen years. Defeat, weakness, and disaster have beset the footsteps of the other. We are told not to account any man happy or prosperous until he is dead. The future may differ from the past. The closing years of one Sovereign may be calm and prosperous, those of the other may be troubled and full of sorrows.

But nothing that is to come after can blot out those seventeen years, teeming with memorable deeds and mighty changes, that look like the forerunners of doom.

It was the fate of Francis Joseph to be educated by the Jesuits and by his mother, the Archduchess Sophia, and they brought him up in the bad traditions of his House and the worse traditions of the Court of Rome. Worse schooling could not fall to the lot of man. For this young prince could not have been taught to look up to the enlightened princes of his House, but rather to the darker sort, who were practised alike in temporal and spiritual tyranny. He came out of the nursery to ascend a throne, and found his subjects in revolt on all sides. The Italians had been defeated and Lombardy recovered, but Venice held out against the Austrians and Rome against the French. In Hungary, however, Austria had been worsted, and at the very outset of his reign this young Emperor had to call in to his aid the arms of Russia, willingly lent him by the Sovereign who at that time overshadowed Germany and Eastern Europe. By Russian cannon and bayonets the gallant Hungarians were overthrown. The victors stained their victory by crimes which find no equal in the annals of Hungary except in the period of religious persecution. But punishment followed swiftly enough. When the swords of the Hungarians were required in 1859 and 1866 they were not to be had. Hungary was deaf to the appeals of one who is not her legal king, and whose servants in 1849, he assenting, were guilty of the foulest murder. He was young, inexperienced, fresh from the hands of bad teachers, surrounded by worse counsellors, or he would never have taken his orders from a Russian General, and commanded Russians against even revolted Hungarians. The potent arm of Nicholas struck down his enemies and planted him firmly on his throne, and he was grateful, and not ashamed. Let no lowly clown blush for his humble ignorance. What must the moral training and intellectual insight of that man have been who could submit to be saved thus, and not die of humiliation.

After the bloody ending of the Hungarian war, Nicholas was more powerful than ever. The Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia were his vassals, and all the little Kings sat at his footstool, grateful for crumbs of favour. The rival German Houses quarrelled about the worthless Elector of Hesse, and were going to fight, but grounded arms when Nicholas uttered his

order. The sole consolation of Francis Joseph was that his faithful old soldier had beaten Charles Albert at Novara, that Venice had surrendered, and that the Prince President of France had captured Rome. The huge composite empire was complete again. Austria was still a Great Power. She presided over the German Diet again, and kept up the semblance of Imperial sway. She stretched her iron fingers over Italy, and save in Piedmont and Rome was absolute mistress from Spertivento to the snowy ridges of the Alps. But in 1853 the Emperor, still only three-and-twenty, was reminded, as he gazed from the ramparts of Vienna, that he had Hungarian subjects, when Lebeney tried to take his life, and failing, paid the forfeit of his own. Few Sovereigns of our time have been nearer a violent death, for the assassin's knife struck the sacred person of the Emperor.

So far the poor Emperor had met with little save mortification. Now a time had come when it seemed that his empire might resume her old place. The man who had begun the race of kingship with him as President had blossomed into an Emperor, and, troubling the East, had roused the wrath of the mighty Nicholas. Austria began again to play a leading part. Her capital was the haunt of plenipotentiaries, her Cabinet the seat of *quasi*-mediation. But here, again, the fate of Francis Joseph was a hard one. He was obliged to lift his hand against the Sovereign who in a moment of supreme peril had supported his throne. It was Austria who made it possible for the Allies to invade the Crimea, and when peace was made it was France, and not Austria, who was forgiven, and Francis Joseph was humiliated in his own eyes when he saw an Italian sitting in an European council beside his own plenipotentiary, compelled to listen to a statement of Italian wrongs, and read at the foot of the treaty the name of Cavour. Nicholas was dead, but Alexander survived. Another Napoleon had arisen to be the enemy of the House of Austria, and the weight of Russian influence being lifted off Germany, Prussia, little regarded then, was prepared to make good her claims as the first of German powers.

The years rolled on, and Austria remained besotted in absolutism. Nay, the Emperor signed a Concordat with Rome, which showed that he was still the mere pupil of the Jesuits. Dangers were gathering, and he fortified himself with the blunted arms of an obsolete armory. He cast his lot with the old, when his rivals were allying them-

selves with the new. The storm burst. True to the policy of the first Napoleon, the third of that name had resolved to disintegrate the Austrian Empire; he answered the assaults on Piedmont by pouring the legions of France into the valley of the Po, and two battles brought the Emperor Francis Joseph to his feet. In less than two months Austrian influence in Italy was destroyed, and Austrian power alone held Venetia chained to the empire. Fate was hard upon Francis Joseph, but adversity told upon his sad mind. He was persuaded to bestow a sort of constitution on his people, and to make overtures to the Hungarians. Again it was his lot to be disappointed. His constitution would not march; the Hungarians demanded rights, and would not put up with gifts. Moreover, Francis Joseph had the mortification to see his brother quit him for a throne set up in Mexico by the Emperor of the French. The thin mind of the Emperor working in this perturbed element saw no way out of it, but still he persevered. If he could not reconcile Hungary he could tax her, and if he could not conciliate he could torture the Venetians. It is the fate of this unfortunate man never to see the facts as they are, and consequently all his good intentions yield him but ashes. And the reason seems to be that not only was he ill nurtured, but that his mind was made narrow and his intellectual sight dim. Thus, when it was plainly visible that Prussia, under the guidance of Count von Bismark, was determined to enter the lists with the Emperor for the headship of Germany, instead of setting his own house in order and appealing to German sentiment on German ground—unity—he brought forward an amended act of confederation which suited only the Princes, and saw it fall stillborn before the polite veto of King William. Frustrated by the Hungarians, hated by the Italians, beaten by France, he was now solemnly pooh-poohed by Prussia on his very hearth, and advised to seek the natural centre of gravity of his empire—Buda. Yet when the Schleswig-Holstein dispute rose up for settlement, with the best intentions of sparing bloodshed the Emperor abandoned Germany, and acting as an independent sovereign, allied himself with Prussia, and became her tool. What an immense distance separates the scene in the Hall of the Römer in Frankfort three years ago from the scene at Bad Gastein last year, yet how much wider is the gulf between Gastein and Nikolsburg?

And so it has befallen that, stiffly as he has stood up again after every reverse, this

Emperor has been doomed to unmitigated misfortune. He began as President of Germany; he is now excluded from the Germanic Confederation. He began as virtual Lord of Italy; now, save for a time, he owns and holds not a foot of her soil. He began by harrying Hungary with fire and sword, and killing in cold blood her noblest sons; and he finds Hungary unreconciled, and able to dictate terms to him. He strove to be the head of Germany; he is now almost a dependent on France. No Sovereign in Europe can show the world a more dramatic and sad career, the spectacle of a ruler who fails in everything because, in every supreme moment, perhaps every moment of his life, he is out of harmony with the facts. Looking at his dignified bearing in adversity and his desire to do right, let us pity rather than condemn. "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay," saith the Lord.

From the Saturday Review.

HONOUR.

THERE are few moral codes which are at the same time so rigid in some respects, and so elastic in others, as the code of honour. Nobody could give a very clear account of what it contains, yet every one is ready to allow that whatever it says is of supreme and paramount authority. A New Zealander suddenly introduced to civilized society would perhaps find it as difficult to understand the capriciousness of honour as to comprehend the varieties of pronunciation in the English language. One day it seems to say one thing, and another day it speaks in a totally different tone. Occasionally it shrinks from the very appearance of evil, with all the fine delicacy of a sensitive plant. Every now and then it appears to be as rough and tough and insensible as the oak itself. It is not merely that honour fails continually to draw the line just where it should be drawn, or that fine caustics are able to detect its inconsistencies. There is a much graver difficulty than this about the case. Frequently it happens that honour turns out to be blind and deaf altogether in one direction, while it remains scrupulous and superstitious in another. It never goes about apparently without one wall-eye, and it is a chance and an accident on which side of the road the wall-eye may be fixed. If one had been considering the matter *à priori*, one

would have imagined that a guide so fanciful and so fitful must be useless to help men to discern good from evil. Yet, when we come down to the region of experience, we soon discover that there is no moral code which influences the conduct of human beings more universally. Dishonourable actions are quite as plentiful, no doubt, as blackberries upon a hedge. Men are not, as a rule, any more strictly honourable than they are moral or religious; but there is this distinction, that men are immoral or irreligious without remorse, while no one flies in honour's face without feeling ashamed and degraded by what he has done. Falstaff is commonly considered to be a singular exception to the rest of his species in that he unblushingly reduces dishonour to a system, and professes to glory in what even bad men would acknowledge to be a shame. But he only manages to defend dishonour against the common instinctive feelings which condemn it, by making use of a verbal fallacy. He confuses, in his notorious soliloquy, between honour and reputation; and then tauntingly asks whether honour can set a leg, and whether it is any use to him that died yesterday. But reputation is one thing, and honour is another. People care for the latter who do not value the former in the least. Many a cynic or a sceptic who regards present or posthumous fame as an idle breath obeys rigidly, in his private life, those maxims which are peculiarly supposed to govern the conduct and manners of a gentleman. It is true that honour cannot perform a surgical operation, but it is equally true that no one could live in comfort or peace with his fellows who openly acknowledged no allegiance to honourable ideas. There is honour among thieves; and if Falstaff had not mixed up the distinct conceptions of fame and of honour for the sake of a brilliant paradox, honour would not have been repudiated even by Falstaff. It is, accordingly, the more noteworthy that a rule of life which is universally accepted should appear to be monstrously capricious and incoherent in its decrees.

This incoherency must be patent to any one who watches the actions of men and women upon anything like an extended scale. There is a man's honour, and there is a woman's honour, but they scarcely seem to have anything to do with one another. And both are oracles that give forth an uncertain sound. The morality of the Persians in the time of Cyrus admitted of being reduced to a simple precept. Young gentlemen once upon a time were taught to

ride, to avoid debts, and to speak the truth. An English gentleman's education is not so consistent or so precise. He need not pay his debts, unless indeed his debtor possessed no other security than a bare promise, in which case honour comes to the rescue of the debtor, and insists upon prompt and punctual payment. Financial obligations which have anything to do with horses, above all other debts, are sacred. It is, again, established as an important principle that the truth should be told as between man and man, but no gentleman of fashion — in other days at least — expected to be tied down tightly to the truth in his intercourse with the fairer sex. He pursued a *bonne fortune* by stratagem and by deceit; and it was not only Jove who laughed — as Shakspeare says — at lovers' perjuries, for an experienced lover laughed at them himself. If we turn from love to battle, a similar phenomenon meets us. Sometimes it is discreditable to be afraid, but not always. A coward cannot show his face again in society, if he turns his back to a cannon-ball or to a bayonet thrust; but a hero may run away from the cholera or from a mad dog. A gentleman is supposed to be obliged never on any occasion to exhibit fear of a gentleman who is his equal; but a gentleman who pulls off door-knockers at night, when he has nobly dined, may take to his heels, it is believed, before the police. Hospitality, again, is a virtue both acknowledged and practised upon principle. Yet the roué who would shrink from refusing a visitor a glass of wine under his roof feels little hesitation about dining with a credulous host one day, and seducing his wife upon the next, provided he shows himself ready and willing to face the injured Menelaus in mortal combat the day after. And finally, to take a conspicuous example, there are a thousand acts of meanness which are habitually done, which no one would tamely endure to be reproached with. Casual speculation in the funds may thus be tolerated by an easy conscience, but only a base and poor soul would patiently submit to be called a gambler in public. It may be said that this state of things is rapidly passing away, and that the present generation is better, and more upright in its practice and professions than the generations which have preceded it. This may be so, and it is certain, at any rate, that true men of honour would stigmatize half of the above laxities of demeanour as disreputable and unworthy. But, looking at the past history of honour, we cannot avoid observing that such laxities have from time to time been held to be legitimate even in cir-

cles that would have been shocked to hear a doubt cast on their manliness. If these things exist no longer, at any rate they have been. They are irregularities bound up with the history of honour. Every religious and moral code has its curiosities. Some phenomena deserve to be classed as the curiosities of piety, some as the curiosities of conscience, and the phenomena above described are a few of the many curiosities of the code of honour.

The explanation of all this lies in the origin of the modern idea of honour, and it is to this that we must retrace our steps if we desire to understand what is otherwise inexplicable. Historically, one may go back to the days when a semi-barbarous feudal nobility ruled over a completely barbarous peasantry, and domineered, as far as they were able, over the first nascent elements of an industrial middle-class. Honour then meant what a well-armed gentleman of degree, proud of his person and his position, felt that he owed to his own dignity. Honour in such an age had not much necessarily in common with the *honestum* of Cicero or Horace. All that it enjoined went a very short way beyond what might be enjoined by vanity or pride. The *haughty courage* of which Mr Kingsley is so fond, in its primitive form, was not a very splendid virtue. It consisted chiefly of an innate arrogant resolution to hold the field against any single comer, and never in any case to give way to fear of a rival mortal man. An indomitable temper — *stomachus cedere nescius* — was one of honour's common forms, and a moral code springing from such a personal principle of independence could not but be full of glaring absurdities, none of which would stand the test of common sense. Truth incidentally became one of the characteristic good qualities of such a code, simply because a lie, when probed to its foundation, implies usually some sort of timidity at bottom. So far as falsehood was cowardly it was acknowledged to be objectionable, but where it implied no cowardice it rose to the position of a venial vice. Cruelty in like manner was hardly dishonourable at all. *Haughty courage* was quite as capable of bullying a Jew as Mr. Kingsley is of trying to bully a Roman Catholic pervert. The influence of women softened and corrected this lawless manly spirit; but chivalry, as its name signifies, represented at first the ferocious virtues of a noble who fought on horseback and despised the humbler man-at-arms who did battle upon foot. As manners improved, the law of honour grew refined along with them, but the sense of personal

dignity continued to be the dominant idea which gave life to all the code. Even among the gracious and courteous principles which pervade some of the exquisite old romances that are imbedded in the literature of every civilized European country, curious paradoxes are to be discovered which show that honour, at the best, was a strange thing. The lady to whom one knight openly professed a loyal love was as often as not the wife of the knight's neighbour; who, on her part, felt no scruple at returning the Platonic passion, provided that it was confined within Platonic bounds. Love among the troubadours did not always wear a matrimonial dress. According to a famous sentence of the Court of Love, the mistress who married her adorer, in gaining a husband, lost a lover, and was bound in courtesy to take another. King Matran's wife admits with pride and pleasure to her wedded lord that the conquering Roland is the chaste object of her fancy and her thoughts, and reminds the monarch that his proper place is in the battle-field, and that it is not for him to interfere with the feminine business of romance. Angry as he is at the announcement, Matran knows better than to dispute the established doctrines of chivalry, and leaves his queen in possession of the controversial field. Such, in Provencal poetry, is the law of honour; and if Othello had only taken a lesson from the troubadours, Desdemona would have been permitted in peace to indulge herself in innocent reveries about the virtues and nobility of Cassio. What personal dignity allows depends in every age upon the customs of the time, and where the customs of the time are antiquated, the law of honour is antiquated too.

As man's honour depends on the received opinions about the dignity of men, woman's honour, after a like fashion, varies according to the estimate of the true mission of woman. If the rules of honour were entitled to rank as precepts of a moral code, they would be of universal obligation, and would know no differences of sex. But differences of sex in matters that relate to honour seem to make all the difference in the world. From a religious or moral point of view, chastity, for instance, would seem to be as incumbent on the one sex as it confessedly is upon the other. No doubt, in the case of individuals, a lapse from purity on the part of a woman appears to lead to graver social consequences than a similar masculine declension. Yet the fault in every instance is bilateral, and if the chastity of women is of importance to the world, the man who sins against it is responsible for half the injury

that is done to society by each individual offence. Honour does not reason according to ethics, nor even according to logic. It merely looks at such things according to preconceived notions about a man and a woman's dignity. Feminine frailty is a crime against feminine prestige, and therefore honour punishes it with severity, while it inflicts no like penalty on a man's failing. When once it is admitted that personal dignity is the centre round which the whole teaching of honour revolves, honour begins to appear a moral guide of uncertain and even questionable authority. Ideas of personal dignity require to be pruned by reason, or they may easily become a barrier and an obstacle to the progress of civilization. When they assume an exaggerated shape they are a nuisance and a hindrance to the world. So far as honour is a sentiment based on a rational sense of what men and women ought to be, so far it may be trusted; but honour in a rude and uncultivated form will scarcely carry us much beyond the virtues of a savage. Like many other instinctive feelings, it is valuable when it consists of a subtle sense in harmony with the latest collective wisdom of mankind, but all instinctive feelings need to be continually reformed by the light of judgment and of reason, to prevent them from hindering that advance in morals which they ought to further and assist.

From the Spectator, 25th August.

BISMARK'S APOLOGY.

THERE is patience, then, as well as audacity in Count Bismark. He is going to treat the conquered States of Germany as we treated Scotland, not as we treated Ireland, and leave the unconquered to be fused by the slow action of local public opinion. The Bill for the annexation of Hanover, Hesse, Nassau, and Frankfort only accepted the sovereignty, and the Chamber began to fear that the union was to be dynastic, the King of Prussia becoming also King of Hanover, but Hanover not merging itself finally in Prussia. The consequence of that arrangement would be an immense aggrandizement of the Crown, without any corresponding addition to the power of the people. In answer to doubts of this kind the Premier explained his policy in Committee with much address,

with a singular and welcome frankness, and in the most conciliating spirit. There was no danger of his taking too little, or being beguiled into a false moderation. "The Prussian Government is sufficiently actuated by strong ambition to make it advisable to calm rather than to stimulate it," a hint to be pondered abroad as well as at home. The States named in the Bill are to be incorporated into Prussia finally; not at a bound, "as is the custom of the Latin peoples," but in the "German manner," by humouring any local institutions which may appear endurable. That is, the union is to be complete, the new kingdom being all subject to one Parliament as well as one King, as Scotland and England are, but if Hanover has any system of law or municipal organization which she prefers, she will retain it, as Scotland does, till she is willing to give it up. That seems not unwise, uniformity of machinery not being so essential as uniformity of purpose, which the common government will secure. Moderation in annexing territory is dangerous to Prussia, which has broken up all Germany, and ought therefore to reorganize all, but moderation in uniformity removes perhaps the only great difficulties in the way of fusion—the fear of the local bureaucracy lest they should be superseded, and the dislike of the people towards the rigid Prussian officials. If the fusion were made absolute and immediate, the bureaux must be imported from Prussia, and the signs of conquest will be far too visible, as they were in Italy, when for a year or two if you saw an official with 100*l.* a year you saw a Piedmontese. Better let the old men whom the people know remain, even though there should be some difficulty in teaching them to move in the hard exact, attentive manner insisted upon in Prussia, where an official who receives an order is expected not only to obey it, but to keep on obeying it with all his energies, to economize State expenditure, for example, persistently, and not by fits and starts. Gradually localisms will die away, as they would die away in Scotland, but that the stronger nation approves them almost as cordially as the weaker one; and the political fusion is to be complete. Three alternatives, says Count Bismark, were open to the Government—annexation, accepted with the reserve described; partition, rejected nominally because the populations disliked it, really because the King of the little bit left would always be intriguing to regain the remainder; and the creation of two kingships in one State. This is really

going to be done in Saxony. "We are compelled," he says, "by circumstances," i. e., by the interference both of France and Austria, to set up two Kings in Saxony, one the military King, "a foreigner always coming forward with distasteful requirements," the other the civil King, always "exercising the beneficent influences of the civil régime," an arrangement which the Premier evidently does not believe calculated to endure, and which, should it last long, will undoubtedly turn the good Saxons to determined malcontents, as undutiful as children would be if the nurse always cosseted and the mother always slapped. It is, however, to be tried for the present, and so is the other, of keeping up hereditary Lord-Lieutenants in the persons of those Princes who adhere to Prussia. They are to be liberally treated, much more liberally than in the scheme of 1848, the King for the present at all events declining the Imperial Crown. "I admit," says the Premier, "that in theory that constitution proceeds with more strictness and consistency than our scheme, the union, because it makes, so to speak, of the different sovereigns the subjects, the vassals, of the future Emperor of Germany, but these sovereigns will be more disposed to concede rights to an ally, a functionary of the union, than to an Emperor and suzerain." The South, which now, says the Count, with his strange frankness, "contains a large hostile population," will gradually be conciliated by the good faith displayed towards all friendly Princes, and then indeed Germany may at last become a whole. At present it is better, he says, not to offer Bavaria the terms imposed on Saxony. It is easy to see amidst all this that the statesman has been fettered by palace intrigues, that he is occasionally moderate perforce, and sometimes invents the argument after the action has been resolved on for very different reasons. But he is steering the ship well, and as rapidly as he dare, fusing territories inhabited by nearly four millions of people, and sending the Crown Prince to govern them, so that when he is King he may understand the necessity of complete uniformity, and pressing on the allied populations the one incident of the Revolution they cordially detest. Mecklenburgers, and Oldenburgers, and Brunswickers compelled to submit to the unrelenting Landwehr conscription, whether they fuse themselves in Prussia or no, will soon grow, as the Count says, impatient of being "second-class Prussians," soon long for the broader careers and more vigorous life of the Im-

perial State. Successive petitions from the people to a liberal King can hardly be resisted, even if the Princes themselves do not find, like the Catholic Hohenzollerns, that playing at government when one must carry out most exasperating orders from a foreign capital is work yielding little dignity and less enjoyment. The process will be a slow one, too slow, we fear, for this generation, but it is none the less inevitable.

It is much to have secured even this, for the Premier's course has been beset with difficulties of which we obtain some inkling in the final arrangements made with the Southern States. Count von Bismark intended, as we know, to drive Hesse Darmstadt to the south of the Main, to deprive Bavaria of Franconia and the Palatinate, clip her into powerlessness, and to punish Wurtemberg for its audacious seizure of Hohenzollern. The King, however, still rules in Prussia, and the King, as we have all heard, is not the man whom Bismark, had it been left to him, would have created. He minds people of his own caste, reads autographs from the Czar, listens to the great ladies of his family, feels as if it hurt him to strip nephews and relatives of the dignity to which they were born, and on which they have set their hearts as an English Peer does on his social status. For relations to be poorer than oneself is pleasant, but for relations to lose caste — that is not so enjoyable. He does not like the sense of being left lonely on a pinnacle, with nobody in Germany to whom he can talk as to an equal. The Wurtemberger is the Czar's brother-in-law, and one must be polite, so in virtue of his wife he is left off with a fine. The Duke of Baden married the King's daughter, and robbing daughters is offensive to kindly natured men, so Baden gets off with a contribution which a new lease for the gaming-tables will supply. Hesse Darmstadt will belong to the husband of the future Queen of Prussia, so the frontier of the new kingdom is broken, and a half State admitted into North Germany in order that a British Princess should not be inconvenienced or her husband suffer even the appearance of compulsion. Only Homburg is ceded, a sacrifice which will hurt the gamblers of Europe more than its respectable people, and the reversionary claim to Hesse Cassel on the Elector's death. Then, as the Palatinate is not wanted for Princess Alice, Bavaria is allowed to retain it, Bavaria yielding Princesses in swarms both to Vienna and Berlin; and the great Southern State loses only Franconia, if indeed even

that. Think of the maze of intrigue in which Count von Bismark must have been involved, the pressure from this Prince and that great lady, the ridiculous arguments which he must have answered with a respectful face and a savage heart. He does not believe in divine right, this man, and he does believe in himself; and all this parcelling out of provinces to gratify family claims, and soothe the French Court, and conciliate the British Court, and not offend the Russian Court, and banish this personal susceptibility, and remove that conscientious scruple, and avoid that threatened "cut direct," must have made him wish heartily that he had been for one short year dictator. The Princes, if they had come back then, would at least not have known their States. Even now, when so much has been compromised, there is danger remaining, for the Junkers are savage with the overthrow of the Princes, the King is fascinated with the notion of reigning over vassal sovereigns and reviving the Middle Ages, and Count von Bismark is desperately inclined to hold out that olive branch with which he once threatened his Liberal opponents. If he does hold it out, and they recognize that it is held out, Germany will have gained yet one more advantage from her Seven Days' War, a statesman who, while he must be Liberal, has yet proved that he can govern. In the entire Fortschritt party there is not a man qualified by experience to administer a department, but with Bismark and half-a-dozen clerks the German Liberals would have a Cabinet ready at any moment to take office. The Junkers may yet regret that they made such a fuss about the expulsion of half-a-dozen Kings.

From the Saturday Review.

EARLY RISERS.

EVERY reasonable man — every one, that is, who gets up when he chooses and goes to bed when he feels inclined — has at times been vexed by the zeal of early risers. If two men take the same allowance of sleep, but one of them begins it at eleven o'clock and the other at two, the first will feel himself a moral head and shoulders above his friend. He fancies himself to be standing on a little pedestal of conscious virtue, from which he may, figuratively speaking, flap his wings

and crow over his inferiors. He is always mentally voting little congratulatory addresses to himself, pointing out that, by his self-denial and constant superiority to the ordinary weaknesses of humanity, he has set an example whose influence can hardly be over-estimated. He sometimes has sufficient self-command to confine his demands upon popular admiration to a mere tacit assumption; but, however carefully he may act the part of modest merit, he glows with an inward satisfaction which can never be quite repressed. He could not, though he would, hide his light under a bushel; it shines through him as through an alabaster vase; he is too much of an angel among common men to be able quite to cover up his wings. If St. Simeon Stylites had come down from his pillar in the flesh, he would certainly have carried it about with him in spirit; he would have made some incidental reference to the "rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp and sleet and snow" which he had borne. He would have let his acquaintances know that it was no joke, whatever they might think, to stand twenty years on a pillar. The early riser is the Stylites of private life. He glories, even in secret, over his self-inflicted miseries; but, to extract from such recollections all the consolation which they can afford, it is necessary to share them with other people. He is delighted to speak with authority as to the state of the weather between six and seven in the morning. He brings in studiously unintentional references to his walks before breakfast, and he goes quietly to sleep after dinner as if he had earned a clear right to a little repose. Few people have strength of mind enough really to bear up against claims of this kind. Radicals, who say, perhaps very sincerely, that a man's a man for a' that, sometimes betray a perceptible awkwardness in the presence of a lord. No one will admit that mere wealth has any claims to respect; yet we somehow feel an instinctive deference towards a man with a good balance at his banker's, of which we are not conscious towards his neighbour who lives from hand to mouth. In the same way, few people really dare to dispute the merits of a man who gets up at six in the morning; he has accumulated a balance of solid virtue which gives an undefined weight of respectability to his actions. It appears to be merely due to his benevolence that he does not crush you to the earth with a sense of moral inferiority.

And yet, if we could only venture to make a stand, perhaps we might find that

this claim is so imposing only because it has not been critically tested. Early rising is, to a considerable extent, a proof of imperfect civilization. In the East, everybody is up with the sun; as, for obvious reasons, labouring men are compelled to be here. But the invention of candles, and the change from physical to intellectual labour, have altered all the conditions of life. The evening hours are now superior in almost every respect to those of the morning. In a social point of view, it is unnecessary to demonstrate that no man can enjoy society before breakfast. If it were often possible for friends to gather at that time, as they do at certain baths to drink the waters, the consequences would be disastrous; for nature has implanted in the human breast a quarrelsome, captious, and ill-humoured spirit which is always predominant during the first hours of the day. Strictly speaking, man does not become a social being until breakfast, and even then the instinct exists in a very modified form; many people read the newspaper at breakfast, but no one could be brute enough to read it at dinner. In those barbarous times when dinner took place about midday, supper was the really sociable meal, which has been gradually superseded by the onward movement of dinner. From all this it follows that a man's social tendencies are almost always in the inverse ratio of his propensity to early rising. When Cæsar remarked, "Let me have men about me that are fat, sleek-headed men and such as sleep o' nights," he evidently meant to condemn, not the unfortunate beings who may be physically lean, but the restless temperament which leads to early rising, self-conceit, discontent, and conspiracy. If people who get up prematurely are disagreeable, and even dangerous, in a social point of view, they will equally fail to justify themselves on intellectual grounds. Those who delight in always firing off small prudential maxims of the "early to bed, early to rise" variety generally denounce the practice of study at night. But here, again, the assumption seems to be gratuitous. The early riser descends every morning into a partial chaos; fires are smoking and green wood sputtering; every house is haunted by unkempt servants, with dusters and shovels, going through the hateful process of putting things in order; the world is slowly getting under weigh, and the machinery moves at first with slow jerks and creaks, and raising clouds of dust. It is absurd to suppose that such an atmosphere of discomfort can be more favourable to mental labour than

the harmonious quiet of the evening, when a man may entrench himself in perfect repose, without fear of interruption; when even London approximates to the quiet of the country, and when all the discordant elements of the day have more or less shaken into their places. Every smoker knows the superiority of the evening over the morning cigar; which proves that a philosophical and contemplative frame of mind is far more easily attained at the end than at the beginning of the day, a mental attitude of serene meditation being essential to intelligent smoking. It is true that a man's powers may be supposed to be fresher and less exhausted in the morning; but, as a rule, this advantage is counterbalanced by the diminution of restlessness and irritability, and the greater power of concentration, produced by the evening calmness. A man may possibly write novels before breakfast with success, because it is necessary that his sensibility to external impressions should be as lively and fresh as possible. He may of course do anything that comes under the name of business most effectively in the middle of the day. But he can hardly be a metaphysician till past twelve at night, except on peril of setting down all metaphysics as folly. Some detractors might, it is true, observe that this is because metaphysics are improved by the haziness of outline congenial to a mind which is too tired to be quite steady in its perceptions; but it is doubtless really owing to the fact that they require sustained and undiverted attention. Now such attention is impossible, so long as the meditator may be exposed to the cries of milkmen or barrel-organs; the dull steady sound of late carriages is rather favourable than otherwise to profound reflection. We, therefore, consider, that, for almost all purposes, the evening hours have a distinct superiority over the morning for the civilized part of mankind, whose pursuits do not require daylight, and who know the use of gas and candlelight.

For those who have to labour in the fields or workshops, or to get their living by hunting, like savages, there are obvious advantages about making the most of the daylight. Now philosophers have remarked that an instinct, like a physical organ, often survives after its original function has become unimportant. Animals retain rudimentary claws or wings which have become perfectly useless, as a legacy from their remote ancestors; a dog still turns himself three times round before he lies down, be-

cause his great great grandfathers did so in the days when they were wild beasts roaming amongst long grass; and every tamed animal preserves for a time certain instincts which were only useful to him in his wild state. The sentiment about early rising is such a traditional instinct, which has wandered into an era where it is not wanted. A man who got up two hours after the sun, in the middle ages, had doubtless, as a rule, wasted two hours; and the same would be true of a bricklayer at the present day who should begin his work at eight instead of six. It is right and natural that such proofs of laziness should be marked with a certain stigma. But it is too bad that cultivated beings should go on quoting at us their little hoard of maxims, which at best are gross anachronisms, as though they were eternal truths; and that even the most modest of men should go about running over with ill-concealed complacency, because they have arranged their day on an obsolete hypothesis. If a man comes down a few minutes late, they covertly or openly twit him with laziness; but they would be as much shocked if the same charge were retorted upon them for going to bed prematurely, as a preacher of charity is sometimes shocked at being called uncharitable; it is true, he objects to his enemies as much as they object to him, but that is because his enemies are in the wrong. If, however, we should be disposed to grant that there is really something in the claim which early risers put forward so pretentiously to the virtue of activity, we should still wish to know why it is of so specially offensive and aggressive a type. Why must they be always dashing it in our faces, and giving thanks at every turn that they are not as other men? Why should an early riser walk through the world wrapped in an invisible cloak of moral pre-eminence? After all, we are fellow-creatures, even if we are too fond of our beds in the morning. The most rabid of the sect must admit that a man is not necessarily a drunkard nor an abandoned slave to his passions because he does not get up at six o'clock; and yet, whilst mixing with the outer world, they always contrive to make it felt that all but themselves are more or less publicans and sinners.

An explanation of the abnormal development of self-esteem to which this and some other second-rate virtues give rise may perhaps be found in the very fact of their smallness. A man who has performed some great and heroic action is bound in honour not to boast of it; he may generally assume,

too, that other people will be sufficiently disposed to recognise his claims without requiring them to be put obtrusively forward; but the family of petty virtues to which early rising belongs—punctuality, order, and so forth—require some additional inducements for their practice. They are not amiable qualities. Nobody loves a man the better for always remembering that procrastination is the thief of time, that a stitch in time saves nine, and that a penny saved is a penny got; on the contrary, we are rather apt to consider him as a standing insult to us for our own deficiencies in those respects. It is, therefore, provided, as a natural compensation, that they should give rise to a disproportionate amount of self-satisfaction. As a man gets no thanks from anybody else, and feels that the virtue is one which will gain its whole reward in an extra share of material prosperity, he tries to make up the difference by constant contemplation of his own excellence. The character which embodies all these characteristics in the highest degree is generally known by the name of a good man of business. That title, which sometimes implies very useful qualities, is not seldom applied to merely negative virtues. It is applied to a man who ties up all his letters in red tape, never misses a train, and always answers by return of post. It may also imply a sound judgment. But a large number of those who claim it are merely remarkable for their habit of going through all the forms of extreme precision and carefulness. Such men are generally more conceited than any other class of meritorious citizens. They look down with a contempt, sometimes affable and sometimes simply arrogant, upon any one whom they fancy to be less of a walking ledger than themselves. Fortunately, this is a kind of conceit which can seldom find opportunities for display in private life. The one virtue of the bundle which go to form the character is capable of making itself so offensive that it is just as well that we have, as a rule, to search counting-houses or lawyers' offices for full-blown specimens of the whole. Early risers are so capable of trampling us under foot, on the strength of that one qualification, that, if arrayed in all the virtues of the complete man of business, they would become unbearable.

From the Saturday Review, 1 Sept.
MEXICO.

THE Empress of Mexico, it is announced, is once more at Miramar, and her reign is almost at an end. It is not three years since she and her husband left their Austrian home, full of the great prospects before them, and glad of an opportunity of showing how well they could govern. Now her dream is over, and she must be very glad to be back again where life is in some degree tranquil and safe, and where to be shot at is the exception and not the rule. Ever since the defeat of the Southern States, the Empire of Mexico has been dwindling away; bigger dangers have been continually threatening it, and its supporters have become fewer and more fainthearted. The Emperor of the FRENCH wisely decided to abandon his great project, and to leave his bright vision unfilled. The United States pressed him hard, and he gave in. He could not afford to quarrel with so powerful an enemy, and his only aim recently has been to retire without absolute and public disgrace. The Emperor MAXIMILIAN naturally revolted at being considered altogether the creature and puppet of France; and he has tried very hard to create for himself an independent position, and to show that he could govern Mexico very well although the French went away. But he has had no chance whatever of succeeding, and what little chance he might have had he has thrown away. He has not ruled wisely, and has been in some respects too good, and in others too bad, for the post. He has made, above all things, the great mistake of thinking that government consists in creating the machinery of government. He has been forever issuing decrees, changing officials, encouraging visionary projects, taking up and dismissing favourites. He has disgusted and alienated the Mexicans, without securing the aid of competent foreigners. He has borrowed money recklessly, and contracted loan after loan without getting more than a contemptible fraction of the pittance which these loans were said nominally to produce. He has enlisted a native army, and seen it melt away without striking a blow, because he could neither drill nor pay it. He has listened to the wild schemes of Confederate visitors or adventurers when the fortunes of the South

were utterly shattered and its power utterly broken. He hoped at one time to find in his Austrians and Belgians a counterforce to the French, and substitutes for them when the French went away. But the United States simply ordered Austria not to send out any fresh soldiers, and the order was submissively obeyed; and the bulk of these foreign legions, badly led, badly disposed, and very badly paid, have either been cut to pieces or have abandoned their colours. One last effort was, however, to be made, and the EMPRESS was sent to ask in person for a last boon from the Emperor NAPOLEON. All she wanted was that the French would allow a sufficient portion of the Mexican revenues to be applied to the organization of a native army. If the French would but let Mexico have the use of its own resources for a few months, a native army might be found that would be fit to replace the French. It does not seem very much to ask, but the Emperor NAPOLEON was most resolute in deciding that it was too much to concede. He will not do anything more for the empire he set up, and he probably thinks that the sooner the whole business is at an end the better.

It is one of the prominent parts of his system, and has been one of the chief means of his success, that he is always willing to back out when he finds himself in a mess. He knows that he cannot persevere in his great Mexican scheme without running a most serious risk. The French are loud and almost unanimous in denouncing the whole expedition as a mistake. The Americans are very determined that the Mexican Empire shall end, and that the French shall withdraw at a very early date. The terms in which President JOHNSON has proclaimed the nullity of the blockade of Matamoras are very insulting to France. The Emperor whom France has set up is spoken of in the most insulting terms, as a mere intruder, and the evils under which Mexico labours are distinctly said to have been aggravated by the presence of the French. The blockade which a French vessel is enforcing is considered to be altogether non-existent. But probably the Americans are perfectly aware that no offence will be taken at Paris. What is the Emperor NAPOLEON to do if he is not prepared to go to war with the United States? And he certainly is not prepared to go to war. He could not engage in a contest with the United States, and have any fair prospect of success, if a condition of success was that he should continue to hold Mexico. France would not support him, and perhaps one of the surest means of preserving peace is that

the United States should take a high line, and should show him and all the world that they intend to have their way, and can have it. In the same way, Count BISMARCK prevented a war by showing that he was not afraid of France, and boldly accepting the challenge which the EMPEROR sent him. And it seems as if the French had grown wiser than they used to be, and were inclined to learn lessons of moderation from their Sovereign. Men may fail in politics, and yet deserve and win respect. The Emperor MAXIMILIAN has failed in Mexico, but still he has played a part that cannot be called contemptible. He has set to work with zeal, courage, and perseverance, and has done his best to govern well. He has always been willing to encounter the most serious personal risks; he has taken great pains to see and to understand the country and the people. When he gets back to Miramar he will deserve to be looked on as in other days men looked on the less successful class of Arctic voyagers, who showed undeniable pluck and perseverance, and had dreams of winning a noble fame and doing the world a service, but who, from taking a wrong course, or going in a hopeless direction, or having a bad crew, or a want of provisions and proper stores, did nothing, and never had any real chance of doing anything. The Emperor NAPOLEON, too, although he made a great political mistake when he undertook the Mexican expedition, yet ought to be credited with having engaged in it from motives that were far from ignoble, and with having a sincere desire to raise a fallen country, as well as to push the fortunes of France.

The fate of the Emperor MAXIMILIAN will be due, however, not only to his own mistakes and to the change of purpose enforced on France by the United States, but also to the pertinacity of his opponents. If the Mexicans can be said to be capable of any deep feeling, they may be said to have an intense hatred of foreigners in general, and of the French in particular. The Liberals who have waged war against MAXIMILIAN so pertinaciously, and in the face of such great discouragement, have combined a sort of feverish patriotism with their natural wish to live a loafing, plundering life; and they certainly deserve great credit for the patriotic efforts they have made even when their cause seemed most hopeless. At present they hold all the Northern provinces, all the Atlantic seaports except Vera Cruz, and almost the whole line of the Pacific. Throughout the country they find very little opposition to them, and when it is said that

the French still hold the City of Mexico, the great road to the north and the road to Vera Cruz, together with that port itself, all has been said that can be said. If it turns out that the French troops, the remains of the foreign legions, the EMPEROR and his suite, and all Frenchmen of any note get away safely, this is all that can be expected; and the chief fear is lest, when the French military force is withdrawn, there should be a general massacre of Frenchmen. There is, however, good ground for hoping that the fall of the Mexican Empire will not be followed by a reign of pure anarchy. The Emperor NAPOLEON is going to withdraw his troops, but he has probably agreed to withdraw them under some arrangement with the United States. Mr. SEWARD is believed to favour the Presidency of SANTA ANNA, and at one time the American Government was understood to be willing to lend active aid in establishing SANTA ANNA, if the French would have co-operated. Perhaps the time for this has gone by, and certainly the bulk of those who have fought most zealously against the French are not inclined to have anything to do with SANTA ANNA. But under one pretext or another, and in the person of some President to be decided on, a Republican Government will be set up, virtually protected by the United States. The Northern provinces may possibly be held for a time by American troops; a loan secured on these provinces may be granted by the United States Government to set up the new order of things, and perhaps to soothe the feelings of the French by reimbursing them a fraction of their outlay; and American adventurers will seize on all the most promising speculations that the country has to offer. Americans will gradually turn the wealth of the country to advantage, and make the few industrial enterprises of Mexico their own. It is not as if the Empire had been a mere blank. Something has been done under it, though not much. The City of Mexico, which was almost in ruins, has been cleaned, ornamented, and to some extent rebuilt; a hundred miles of the railway, on the progress of which more than on any other one condition the civilization of Mexico depends, have been constructed; the cultivation of the land has been partially resumed, and trade has been considerably increased. Those therefore who are the heirs of the Empire will have a heritage that will not be despicable, and if the Americans are the heirs they may be trusted to make the most of it.

From the London Review.

THE LETTERS OF EUGENIE DE GUERIN.*

THE gifted authoress of these Letters is favourably known by her published Journal, which has been well received on the Continent as well as in this country. In reviewing Mdlle. de Guérin's Journal, we had occasion to dwell in no measured terms of dispraise on the badness of the translation, though we felt it our duty to speak highly and cordially of its pious and able authoress. In the present work we are happy to find that the translator has done ample justice to the beauty and power of the original, which is, in most respects, superior to the authoress's former production. Exception, however, must be taken to one fault which occurs now and then in the work before us, though by no means to the extent that disfigured the translation of the Journal; we allude to the recurrence of "thy" and "your," "thou" and "you," in the same sentence, where the singular number only is implied or expressed in the context. In any further revision of the volume, it will be well for the editor, Mr. Trebutien, to amend such sentences as the following:—"Think of the pleasure *you* will give us, the pleasure *papa* will feel, that dear father who loves *thee* so much that we should be jealous had we not each our own share of affection."

The editor has consulted neither the fame of the authoress nor the taste of the public in giving the world so many letters of a private character, never intended for the public eye, and many of them without any interest beyond the mere accident of their having been written by the pen of one of the purest and gentlest spirits that ever adorned and ennobled human nature. If one-third of this volume were cut off, with its dull and pointless details of petty trifles and idle gossip, the book would gain in interest and popularity. The present form of the Letters is anything but satisfactory; the only principle of selection and arrangement adopted seems to be that of *time*, and letters addressed to all kinds of people and on all kinds of subjects, in every variety of epistolary excellence, are here arranged according to date, from the year 1831 to the year 1847. The gold and the dross, the tares and the wheat, are everywhere confusedly intermingled, and overlaid the

* Letters of Eugénie de Guérin. Edited by G. S. Trebutien. London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co.

one by the other. It is strange that we find no explanations offered of the several French customs alluded to in the correspondence; and it is stranger still that the editor has given us no memoir of this interesting authoress, and not a word of preface to explain the circumstance under which the letters were written, or the persons to whom they were addressed, or the grounds on which those now before us were selected for publication. One can well understand the publication of Cicero's letters, or the correspondence of Pope, without either memoirs of the distinguished writers, or any prefatory notice of their letters, simply because the world is at no loss to understand the peculiar circumstances and views of men so well known to fame, whose epistles we can afford to read by the light of their history. It is with pleasure, however, that we turn to the contemplation of the merits of the greater portion of these letters, reflecting as they do the excellences of the Journal, though in other forms and in greater variety. The most distinguishing feature in the authoress's writings is the presence of that unity which marks the productions of all superior minds. On whatever topic she touches, however abruptly she is carried away by the impulse of the moment, and even where her thoughts are expressed, as they come from her heart or head, without elaboration and without method of any kind, one spirit pervades them all, and one feeling makes them all of kin to each other.

With the exception of a brief sojourn in Paris, to which we have before alluded, Mdlle. Eugénie de Guérin seems to have spent most of her days in the country, and there to have enjoyed "those happy times when one no longer belongs to earth, and when one lets heart, soul, and mind wing their way freely to Heaven." "One has so much time for thought in the country," she observes; "for, however occupied one may be, 'tis with nothing that engrosses the mind, which works away on its own account like a mill-wheel. Let us try to make it turn to some purpose, give it good grain to grind, it yields us what we entrust to it; let our memory be filled with beautiful things, and our thoughts will be beautiful. Imagination takes the hue of what it dwells on." It is impossible to exaggerate the depth of her feelings of attachment to external nature and to her fellow-creatures; and yet the song of the bird, the hum of the bee, and the whispers of the wind, the babble of babes, and the chatter of children, are but voices that recall her to her Maker, and she only believes in the affections of the heart, because

we can carry them up to Heaven, and raise them up to God. To her it is a delight "to pray among the flowers, and to feel her soul rise with their perfume before her God." In all things she recognizes "a Providence, a great deal of Providence," and in all issues "she looks upon what happens on earth as coming from Heaven." In suffering she sees but a path to Heaven. Beautifully and touchingly does she observe:—"Heaven is held out, but we must gain it by suffering, and, Like Jesus Christ, arrive at glory by the long path of Calvary"—a thought probably suggested by the crucifixion to the world spoken of by the Apostle. To her it is a delight to read the lessons of religion in the volume of nature around her, and thus to harmonize the works and the word of the Almighty, as in the following touching episode:—"Poor world! thus it is one leaves it: now on this side, now on that, we see those we know go away from our midst. Before long one finds oneself alone, isolated amongst the new comers, like leaves of a former year still clinging to the trees when those of spring arrive. One often sees this on oak trees. 'Tis sad, and many a time has made me reflect in our woods. *Everything may be turned to profit by the soul, everything lifts thought on high: the good God wills and approves that all should have reference to Himself, and a dead leaf may utilise apparently purposeless walks.*"

Our authoress was not a mere sentimental devotee; her whole life was filled up with active duties, working out in action, as she did, the spirit of her religion. Her whole correspondence is a written evidence of this, and her sound practical sense made her fully alive to the dangerous side of contemplative devotion. Let us hear her own words, for they will bear quotation:—"There is an ideal side in devotion which has its dangers, which fills the fancy with heaven, angels, seraphic thoughts, without infusing any solid principle into the heart, or turning it to the love of God, and the practice of His law. Without this, even if we spoke with the tongue of angels, we should still be nothing better than sounding brass and tinkling cymbals." Her practical and healthy mind took a delight in history, and in this field of reading she found wholesome food to nourish her religious sympathies. It is thus she expresses her appreciation of historical reading:—"History is, to my thinking, the most interesting and instructive of all reading, because it makes us reflect so much on this world and the other, and leads thought up from men to

God who governs them." It was from study and contemplation of the holiest and purest kind she drew the secret happiness that made her life so divine, and derived the consolations that brightened the darkest of her sorrows. Let us read the secret of her happiness:—" 'Tis not in study, nor in the contemplation of nature, not in man, nor in anything created, that the soul can find consolation but in God, in God alone, in His Word, in the divine Scriptures, in a faithful and believing life. Who is there that kneeling down, with his heart full of tears, does not rise comforted?"

Another remarkable feature in these charming letters is their genuine tone of sincerity; their transparent air of life, truth, and reality. We have no feigned smiles or sighs, no fabulous woes or raptures, no simulated sentiment: the feelings here traced have come glowing and gushing from a living heart, and the opinions recorded have flashed from a living brain, and been the guiding light of a real life. She has evidently written not from hearsay nor from vanity, but from sight and from experience; she gossipped fully and freely of her daily life and daily labours, simply because her heart was too full to be silent, and spake forth from its abundance. She is almost invariably tender and touching, because she is true to her own simple and beautiful nature; she is often brilliant, but her lustre is all her own, and seems the reflection of her own sunny soul. At times she is grandly impassioned, yet, without any visible effort, she softens the heart and charms the soul with a power which seems habitual and natural to her. If ever a woman was lifted by the exalting and sustaining grace of God far above the influence of earth and all that is earthly, this gift would seem to have been given to Mdle. de Guérin, whose exalted piety rose to that height that it seems to have overcome the attraction of her earthly faith, if we may judge by her Journal, and the letters of her pure, spotless, unselfish life.

These letters are worth a thousand sermons on religion and on domestic duties, for they are the very living language of religion itself, visibly represented to the eye as moving and ministering amongst us in the sphere of domestic duty. Mdle. de Guérin has neither lived nor written in vain.

From the Spectator.

A TREASURY OF THOUGHT FROM SHAKESPEARE.*

WE consider this, on the whole, a good selection. The time is now past when the great doctor's well known simile was held sufficient to damn a work of this kind. Certainly, no one in his senses would accept a brick as a specimen of the form and plan of a house; but as certainly no one in his senses would buy a house without having either examined one of the bricks out of which it was built, or satisfied himself of the material in some other way. Clearly, a selection of Shakespeare's best passages does not convey any idea of the form, the essentially dramatic machinery, of his plays, but it furnishes us with a store of what is, *per se*, good sound matter and healthy philosophy, and is so far a valuable and instructive work. And of all selections from this great national library we prefer, as, *ceteris paribus*, more fruitful than those based on any other principle, one purporting to exhibit the philosophy, keen as glass but sound as iron, which is contained therein. We have frequently met with selections calculated to exhibit to us Shakespeare as a scholar or the reverse, a follower of one or another religious sect, a humourist or a poet, but only three or four opportunities of this kind have been offered us before the present of admiring the million-minded observer exclusively as a philosopher. And yet herein surely lies his chief power, viz., as an *Œdipus* of the riddles of the human mind. No Shakespearian critic of the present day, falls into the error of his brethren of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in basing their chief renown upon the formal correctness of the plays. We know that the plot is too often slender and extravagant, and almost always borrowed. His humour also is often provocative of anything rather than mirth. We pass by with something approaching to a shudder the little conceits and quibbles, so poor as to encourage us to hope that they were introduced for one purpose only, viz., "to tickle the ears of the groundlings;" at the same time of so audacious a prominence

* *A Treasury of Thought from Shakespeare. The Choice Sayings of his Principal Characters Analytically and Alphabetically Arranged.* London: Griffin and Co.

as often to bully the baffled and speculative reader into the erroneous hypothesis that it is wit. We pass these by, and love to offer our undivided tribute of gratitude to the Poet and the Philosopher. But his poetry is not in so high a degree descriptive of physical, as of metaphysical, or rather psychological phenomena. It is of the mysterious workings of the human mind under countless possible situations, which we, reading, follow as one follows a guide with a torch through a dark cavern. Thus it joins hands across an indeterminable limit with his philosophy, and in the best possible selection of this kind both would be included together. And why despise such a selection because it appears under its only possible shape? No one throws down his *Spectator* or his *Rambler* in disgust, because he discovers that it is not cast in a dramatic form. And yet a work of the kind now under our hands is in reality a sister volume to those two, and is calculated to satisfy the same want of the mind.

If there be any difference, it is not so much in kind as in degree. All three essentially spectators, neither the delicate acumen of Addison, nor the clear, strong intellect of Johnson ever penetrated nearly as deep as William Shakespeare did into the mysterious arcana of our psychological structure, and the best possible collection of his discoveries were indeed an intellectual feast. Now, we have said that this is a good book, but we must deprecate a too hasty construction of our meaning. We expect a selection from Shakespeare sent into the world anno Domini 1866 to be something better than merely "good." It should be concentrated essence of all that is best. No doubt too extravagant expectations are frequently entertained of a late-born son, and unless he prove a perfect William Pitt, jun., he is liable to suffer undeservedly from the very comparison with that ideal of perfection which his parents and the monthly nurse had confidently prophesied he would realize. But in the present instance we think ourselves quite justified in attempting to test the chances of our juvenile stranger by such a comparison. On its first appearance in the literary world it has the misfortune to find the whole surface deluged with kindred volumes, and to stem with upraised crest such a flood of fraternal opposition it should be indeed a "fine child."

But we have given it moderate praise, and further than this we cannot go. Occasional indications even compel us to the belief that it doesn't know its own father.

Passages appear out of *Titus Andronicus*, now, by common consent, denied to be in any sense a production of Shakespeare; and one of these, which is given under the head of "Thanks, Thanks, sweet Lavinia. Romans, let us go. Ransomless here we set our prisoners free," appears to us about as much to deserve a place in a treasury of thought from Shakespeare as, "O, widow Dido! Ay, widow Dido!" or "Exeunt Snout, Starveling, and Bottom." But this is one only of many passages which the extension of the selection does not warrant. We do not, however, accuse it of having excluded any, or at least many, extracts from the dramas reasonably worthy of a place. However, there are objections to be urged against its comprehension, as well as against its extension. The poems have been totally excluded from the privilege of representation, and the omission of the many favourite passages therein is somewhat trying. But it will be a useful substitute for memory to essayists and orators, and this, we hold, was its primary object. The choice sayings of Shakespeare's principal characters are classed and alphabetically arranged according to the sustaining ideas of each, and in general with much taste and ingenuity, though we occasionally light upon totally different ideas contained under the same head, as where, e. g., "abridgment," in its obsolete meaning of "farce" (*Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. 1.), appears in company with a specimen of its modern signification, which latter is plainly the only one conformable to the plan and object of the book, thus raising a dark suspicion that the author may have occasionally reversed his method of selection, and made a rather unfair use of his *Ayscough* or his *Clarke*. However, we wish it every success. It is of convenient size as a manual, tastefully bound and printed, and would not disgrace in appearance even the most select drawing-room table.

From the *Spectator*.

IONA.*

WE are informed by Sir. Walter Scott that when, in company with a party of friends, he first set foot on the Isle of Skye,

* *The Cathedral or Abbey Church of Iona. A series of drawings and descriptive letter-press of the ruins. By the Messrs. Bucklers, architects, Oxford; and some account of the Early Celtic Church and of the Mission of St. Columba. By the Right Rev. the Bishop of Argyll and the Isles. London: Day and Sun.*

his first thought and that of all his fellow-voyagers, as all simultaneously stated, was of Johnson's famous Latin Ode. They were all haunted by it; and we suspect that few travellers have visited the Hebrides since the *Journey* was published without some over-shadowing from the spiritual presence of the adventurous and enthusiastic lexicographer. In Iona especially, as the present writer can testify, the words of Johnson keep sounding in the memory of the visitor, and we must in honesty confess that in opening this delightful volume our first wish was to ascertain if the Bishop of Argyll had reproduced the passage on the "Ruins of Iona" which took our ancestors by storm, the respectable President of the Royal Society, Sir Joseph Banks, being, as Boswell tells us, so much struck on reading it, that he clasped his hands together, and remained for some time in an attitude of silent admiration! The rolling apostrophe has its place of honour in Dr. Ewing's pages, and due reverence is paid to the memory of the gallant pilgrim, who, when oppressed with years and failing health, braved the storms of the Hebrides in the late autumn, in an open boat, "happy as a lover," resting not until he could write, "We were now treading that illustrious island which was once the luminary of the Caledonian Islands, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion."

If we fancy that we can afford to smile now at the rhetoric of Johnson, historical research is every day justifying the *instinct* of wonder and veneration which led him to Iona, and is revealing to us how much Europe owed to the island, and to the Celtic Christianity which made it the headquarters of a very wide-spread missionary enterprise.

The volume before us consists of two parts, an account, with illustrations, of the ruins of the Cathedral of Iona as they now exist, and a sketch of the history of early Celtic Christianity, and specially of the mission of St. Columba. The former, by the Messrs. Buckler, of Oxford, is very complete and satisfactory. The letter-press is luminous and unpedantic, and with the aid of the plates will enable even the

reader who is but slightly acquainted with the mysteries of Church architecture to form a very clear conception of the form, size, and style of the noble abbey and adjoining monastery, as they originally stood, occupying an area of more than three acres.

No portion, however, of these magnificent remains dates from that period of the history of Iona which has most interest for us, and readers of the *Record* and of the Religious Tract Society's publications should be duly warned against a false enthusiasm, in case any of them may be meditating a visit to Iona during these holiday weeks; for the ruins are not, as one of the Society's writers affirms, "memorials of the zealous and devoted labours of St. Columba and his associates." Their architecture is that of the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, and, as the author to whom we have just referred tells us truly that a general conformity with the Church of Rome, doctrinal and ritual, had been established throughout Scotland in the eleventh century, the builders must have been children of the "Scarlet Lady." Consequently, what remains of their handiwork — being, moreover, so exceedingly unlike the style of Exeter Hall — "cannot fail," indeed, "to excite the deepest emotion in the heart of the Christian;" but then, if he be of the genuine Tract type, that emotion will be one of profound thankfulness for the light which was denied to them. For clearly, in "taking our walks abroad," either among the ruins of the past or the raggedness of the present, gratitude for favours withheld from others should be the burden of our song, unless Dr. Watts was *not* the poet elected of Heaven to teach our nurseries philanthropy.

For ourselves, we must regret that we can only speak in general terms of the many tokens of architectural genius which Iona still preserves, and which will survive, we cannot but think, in the pages of the volume before us, when the symmetry of circular massive doorway, the flowing grace of pointed window, and the exquisite sculpture of the sedilia in the choir, and that of the canopy and corbel of the adjacent piscina will have passed away from the ruins themselves.

END OF VOLUME XC.



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